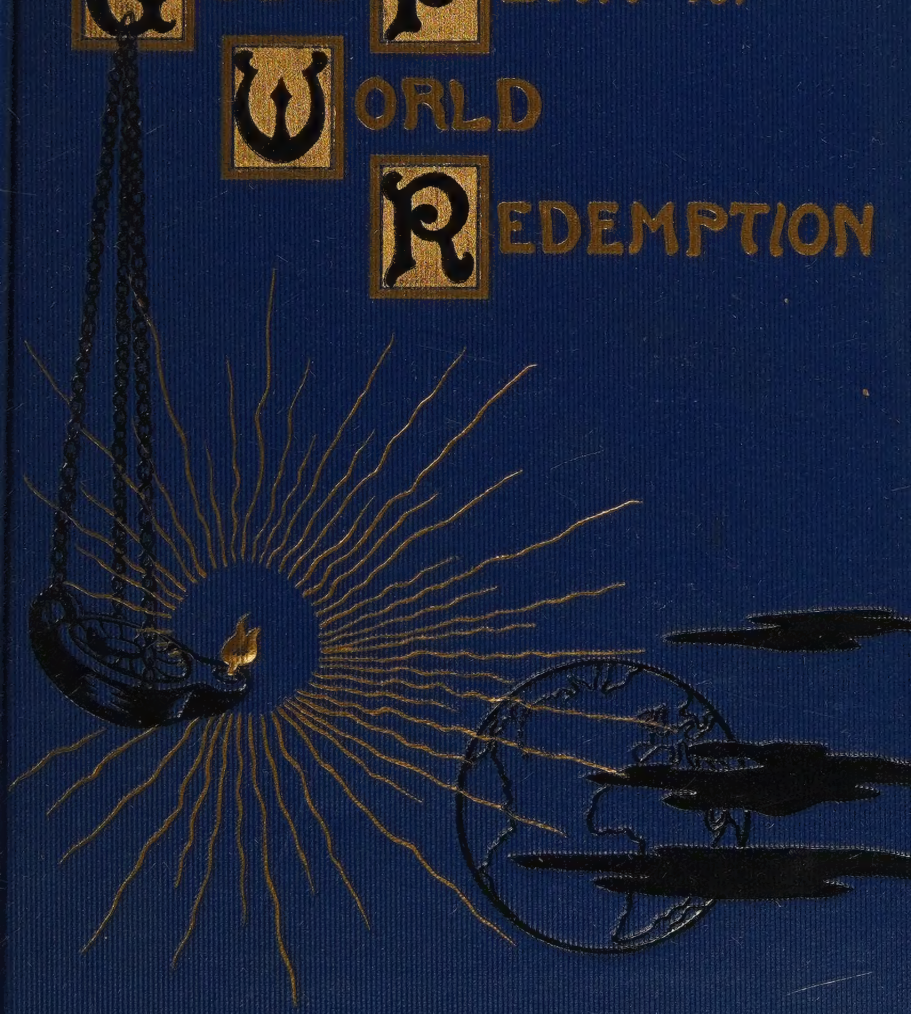
GOD'S PLAN for WORLD REDEMPTION



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GOD'S PLAN FOR WORLD REDEMPTION

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ISAIAH.

God's Plan
for
World Redemption

An Outline Study of the Bible and Missions

By CHARLES R. WATSON

ILLUSTRATED

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of the United Presbyterian Church of N. A.
Philadelphia, Pa.

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THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
NORTH AMERICA

To the

MEN AND WOMEN

whom I know

WHO HAVE SEEN THE VISION

of a

FINISHED TASK

and live and labor

for its realization.

PREFACE

THE need for a handbook whose aim would be to present the missionary message of the Bible, has led to the preparation of this book. Its central theme is the unfolding of God's Plan for World Redemption. The unfolding of this redemptive Plan is traced throughout that portion of human history whose record and whose interpretation are alike given in the Sacred Narrative. The progressive revelation of a body of truth, and the advancing development of a human agent or agency by providential dealings, are parallel movements in the unfolding of the divine Plan. The effort has been made to recognize the place and influence of these two correlated movements.

To those who have in mind the many and extended works on Messianic Prophecy the present treatment of that subject will seem meagre and superficial. The value of this book must be found, therefore, in the clearness of its survey and in the greater vividness with which, by the

very absence of detail, it is able to portray the movement of the divine Plan as it sweeps through the centuries.

It is only in its method, however, that the book is historical. In its aim, it is missionary. If God has a Plan, the least man may do is to link his life to that Plan. If God has a Plan, the most man may do is to let his life move parallel with that Plan. The last two chapters in the book are, therefore, practical. While the book presents a continuous narrative, it is intended that the student will examine carefully the Scripture records upon which the surveys of this book are based. The book has therefore been prepared to serve as a text book for mission study along the lines of the mission study class movement of our day. The immediate use of this text book in United Presbyterian circles has led to the insertion, in the last half of Chapter Eight, of a brief section referring to the missionary responsibilities of this Church. Apart from this section, the treatment of the entire theme is quite general in character. The American Revised Version has been used wherever Bible quotations occur.

The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Prof. Gerhardus Vos, D. D., whose class-room

lectures first suggested this theme to the writer; also to Prof. D. A. McClenahan, D. D., and Prof. John E. Wishart, D. D., who rendered helpful service in reading and criticizing certain sections of the manuscript. In the seventh chapter, some slight use was made of material previously presented in a booklet, "Life Plans."

In the earnest hope that these chapters may serve to interpret to the individual Christian and to the Church, the missionary purposes of our God, and help to raise up a generation which will fulfil these purposes, this book is sent forth.

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CHAPTER I

The Unfolding of God's Plan

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

"Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, Thy foot
Is on the skull which Thou hast made.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

"We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

"But vaster."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

I

THE UNFOLDING OF GOD'S MISSIONARY PLAN

HISTORY! What an interesting study it is, this long narrative of human events! Take the last century and a half. All of our national life is to be found within the limits of that brief period. How much these fifteen decades mean to the United States alone! If we go back four hundred years, we find America just being discovered, the Reformation has not been ushered in in Germany and Europe, and Spain is the dominant nation of Europe. But let us go back one thousand years. It may help us to realize how much history even the last thousand years record, if we will remember that one thousand years ago the Norman Conquest of England had not yet been accomplished, the Crusades had not yet been called, Moorish civilization was flourishing in Spain and the Caliph's fleets were dominant in the Mediterranean. What a world of events since that time!

An Interesting Study.

The measure of our retrospect may be lengthened. We go back two thousand years. All that we call "The Christian Era" lies within this

How Far Back?

period of history, and what pages and volumes are required to narrate the events of simply these two millenniums! But why limit thought to the Christian era? The life of a man may be threescore years and ten, but in the life of the race two thousand years do not reach back to Humanity's middle life. Go back a thousand years before Christ. In distant China, the Chow Dynasty is guiding affairs of state. In India, the Aryan invader has already been in India a thousand years. In Egypt, the New Empire has been established; it is called *New*, because the term *Old* must be reserved for an Empire that began eleven hundred years before. In Palestine, David is King of Israel, while Assyria is the most formidable nation of Western Asia. Of course, Greek history has not yet begun.

Nor need we fear that we are yet in any danger of running into the beginning of things, for, if we wish to go still further back, Chinese historic legends and existing monuments in Egypt will volunteer their services as guides through the labyrinths of still earlier millenniums, while Sargon I. of Babylonia is said to have ruled about 4000 B. C.

The Beginning of Things.

Here are at least some five or six millenniums of authentic history. What a world of events! What a study! this history of the human race, this succession of generations which spell out

national histories and whole civilizations! And what does it all mean? Is history just a record of a long series of accidents? Are all these events just happenings subject to mere Chance, or resultings subject to certain Law? Or is there some great Guiding Hand, some Ruling Power, restraining, guiding, shaping history, so that we can say,

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs"?

Or is the movement of Humanity just

"Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,
Swayed by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me"?

Books of History.

Many books of history have been written. Some are satisfied with recording events, without explaining their meaning. Some look at the great tangle of human events and say they have no meaning, or only some accidental meaning. Some have endeavored—and this is a popular effort in our day—to explain all movements from the point of view of economics. Among other books, we find one, different from the rest in many ways. It is written by a number of different persons, but all seem to have the same viewpoint. It is a good sized book, and deals with a good bit of human history. It begins with this

original sentiment or explanation, "In the beginning God." Farther on in the book we find this statement, "All things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things and in Him all things consist (*i. e.,* hold together)." The answer which this book gives to the age-long problem of the interpretation of history, is to be studied and unfolded in this volume.

Tracing God's Plan.

But it is one thing to say that through the millenniums of history God has been "at the helm of nations," and it is quite another to be able to trace His guidance. Does the Book do that for us, for all of human history? No, it does not. Indeed it is a question whether if it did undertake this great task, there would be any who would be able to follow its explanations. Some day, doubtless, the mysteries of God's methods and purposes as moral Ruler of the Universe will be revealed. Then we shall understand the far stretching millenniums of Chinese history, the civilizations of Assyria and Egypt, the rise and fall of kingdoms in Asia and Europe, the unknown millenniums of Africa's waiting. These all, together with all else that now baffles human explanation, will be spread like an open scroll before the wondering gaze of immortal man, and he may then read "the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will"

and it will be "to the praise of His glory." For that full explanation of the mystery of human history we must wait until the day of the consummation of the ages, when

> . . . "The sun grows cold
> And the stars are old
> And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."

What then does the Book do for us? Does it simply assert that God is the God of history and let it go at that? That would be suggestive but it would be poor anchorage for faith and hope. The Book does more than that.

Halley's Comet.

Not long ago, the civilized world was filled with curiosity and interest over the announcement of the expected appearance of that heavenly visitor which is seen but once in seventy-five years, Halley's Comet. The date of its appearance was fixed for a certain time, and at the time announced or close upon it the comet appeared. Had the astronomer followed it by sight in all its wanderings into space that he should have been able to announce so definitely its return? Not at all. He simply had the few observations of the former appearance of the comet. Knowing its course within a given period, he knew that according to the faithfulness of the laws established by a faithful God, this wanderer in the heavens would fulfil an appointed course and return at

an appointed time. It was not necessary to actually see the comet throughout its whole course; it was only necessary to see it during part of its course.

What the Book Does.

So with the Book. It lifts the veil, it reveals God in the history of the world at a few limited points in the course of human history. It reveals God continuously in the life of a single nation throughout several centuries. Then come a few generalizations concerning God and His plan, some prophecies, and the Book closes. We may read other histories, the records of other nations and try for ourselves to see God in these histories. We may partially succeed; we may think we see Him; we may imagine we understand His workings. But whether we succeed or fail, whether we understand or cannot comprehend it at all, *the fact remains*: GOD IS THERE. The Book tells us so. And furthermore, the Book reveals God and His Plan within the limits already described. This revelation of God's Plan which we find in the Book is to be the object of our study.

Sin Creates Need.

But back of God's Plan is God's Purpose. And back of God's Purpose is God. And God is Love. What will Love purpose and plan and do? Whatever is necessary. And what is necessary? Here we face the great fact with which, after Creation, the Book begins. It is the fact of Sin.

The story of how Sin entered is told in the third chapter of Genesis. The fact of Sin is central to human history. We must lay hold of that fact firmly. If man had not sinned, God might have manifested His love in other ways, but there would surely have been no need for the Old Testament sacrifices nor for the New Testament Sacrifice. The need of man determined the form that love must take. Man's need was for deliverance from sin. So Love took up the task of delivering man from sin. The Purpose of God became a Redemptive Purpose, a Missionary Purpose. And the Plan became a Redemptive Plan, a Missionary Plan. That Purpose and that Plan run through the ages. We must trace them as far as we may.

Practical Value of Knowing God's Plan

The Use of it all.

It is well to ask here, What is the practical value of knowing God's Plan? It is not going to be altogether easy to study the character, the methods, the underlying principles and the outworkings of God's Plan as it sweeps through the centuries. We experience difficulty in following the thought of men as they unfold to us their plans; how then can we expect to follow and apprehend the thought of God without application and the fullest concentration of the powers of

both mind and spirit? If such effort is required, what is to be the practical value of this study?

1. First of all, there will come *a clearness of vision* in our apprehension of truth.

Knowing God Better.

(a) To understand what God is doing, to study the methods which He uses and the principles which He follows, is to come to know God better. God's character is best revealed in the great redemptive work in which He is engaged. Imagine the son of some great statesman, like Gladstone, only knowing his father in the fellowships of the home and unaware of the fact that his father had broader interests than in ministering to that son within that home. The son would not be truly acquainted with his father. Only by going out into the great world of his father's public and national and world-wide interests, would the son know his father and discover his greatness of purpose, his nobility of character, his gifts and powers. To know God we must have fellowship with Him in His great Work.

Understanding History.

(b) To study God's Plan is to understand better human history. It is to find "the key, the master-key to history." He who has caught a clear vision of God's Plan, does not "regard history as following the course of the sun, going from East to West. Nor, like Herder, does he count history to be the manifestation of the pow-

ers of nature in moral progress. Nor is he like Comte, who finds the law of history in the evolution of the intellect." To him a nobler and more satisfying explanation is at hand. When others utter their despairing cry,

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,"

he can say with quiet confidence,

"Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

Understanding the Bible.

(c) To study God's Plan is to get a better understanding of the Bible itself. It is impossible to understand the Word of God without apprehending the Plan of God. We study the Book to discover the Plan, but having discovered the Plan we may go back and read the Book once again and new meaning and new glory will flash from its pages.

(d) To know God's Plan is to better understand the Church of Christ. The Church has an important place in that Plan. Apart from it, the Church has no significance or meaning, no *raison d'être.*

Value to Our Lives.

2. In the second place, the *great value* of studying God's Redemptive Plan will be *to our*

own lives. Every willing life may have a place in that plan. Is there any more inspiring thought than this, that God should link a human life to His majestic power and purposes? Is there any more promising investment of life than in the work which God Himself is forwarding? Is there any safer principle to follow in a life decision, than to lay the life parallel with the will and plan of God? Here is a study of most practical value and its issues are guidance, peace, power and glory.

Helping God.

3. Finally, to study God's Redemptive Plan is to make it possible for us *to help God in hastening the consummation of His Plan.* What a wonderful honor this, to be men on whom God can rely, to stand steady and true to His purposes and plans when others draw back in ignorance or in fear! By the faithfulness of men and women who know His plans, God has again and again either brought about great forward movements or saved the world from worse evils than did occur. So Moses[1] in Egypt and again at the Red Sea;[2] so Caleb at Kadesh-Barnea[3] and Gideon with his hundred men;[4] so Deborah, the prophetess,[5] and David, the shepherd boy.[6]

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[1] Ex. 6: 9.
[2] Ex. 14: 13.
[3] Num. 13: 30.
[4] Judges 7: 19-21.
[5] Judges 4: 4-7.
[6] 1 Sam. 17: 32-37.

"The ages are but baubles hung upon
The thread of some strong lives—and one slight wrist
May lift a century above the dust."

Important Observations

In endeavoring to discover and understand God's Plan, several important points need to be observed:

An Important Distinction.

1. A clear distinction must be drawn between God's Plan and man's apprehension of that Plan. To confuse these two things would be to measure God by man's conception of Him. Indeed, Paul frankly recognizes that the wonderful Plan of God was a mystery to the Old Testament saints. The Plan existed, the purpose was there, but men could not apprehend it. So Paul describes it as a part of his glorious commission "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery *which for ages hath been hid in God.*"[7] Of his own advantage of knowledge, he writes very emphatically: "Ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit."[8] A further distinction follows from that just stated.

Another Distinction.

2. It is necessary to distinguish between God's Plan and man's obedience to that Plan.

[7] Eph. 3: 9. [8] Eph. 3: 4-6.

God's Plan for World Redemption is perfect. But it has no more been realized and fulfilled by man than has God's law of holiness. The Ten Commandments were broken, are being broken. So, too, the Plan for World Redemption has been held back from execution, postponed in its fulfilment, by man's refusals to its call and disobedience to its commissions. The distinction then is an important one. There are many pages of human history which some men have tried to justify as good, when they ought to be condemned as evil. There are periods,—years, decades and even centuries,—in which men disobeyed God, refused to do His will and contravened His gracious purposes. Where there is such disobedience, it is to be condemned, as in the Scripture,[9] and not justified. Because of this distinction between God's own Plan and man's disobedience or disloyalty to it, there follows another consideration.

The Plan in the Book.

3. The Plan must be sought for in the revelation of Scripture and not in human history. The Plan is to be found in the Book. God's Will is revealed in His Word. We learn there what God wishes to accomplish and what He wishes to have accomplished. To go to human history trying to discover from human events alone what is God's Plan, is as foolish as to go to a

[9] Ps. 106; Luke 19: 41; Acts 7: 51-53; Heb. 4: 6, 7.

human life trying to discover from it God's perfect law of holiness. In history, as in the individual human life, there are disobedience and failure and woful shortcomings. Not from the wanderings of the Prodigal Son in "the far country" do we get the clearest revelation of what were the wish and will of the father for his boy, but in the revelation which the father himself gives of his character and will. Not from the base failure of Israel's faith at Kadesh-Barnea, do we discover the highest thought of Jehovah for His people, but in the courageous words of Caleb who lived near to God. When we take up a copy of some Universal History, we do not hold in our hand an illustrated edition of the highest thought of God for the human race. In all human history there is a marring of the beauty of God's highest thought and plan through human disobedience. God is there still, restraining, pleading, striving, over-ruling, but the vision of the perfect Plan is to be found, not in the record of human events, but in the Inspired Word, revealing in a direct and unsullied fashion the character, the will and the plan of God. To the Book, then, must we go to discover the Plan.

There are Stages.

4. In the unfolding of God's great Plan for world redemption, there will be stages. This is to be expected. It is so in every great work. In building a house, the ground must be cleared

away, then the trenches are dug for the foundations, then the foundations are laid, then the walls are built, finally the roof is added. Methods of work will differ according to the stage with which we are dealing, but the purpose is one and the plan is one.

Three Great Periods.

In God's great Plan for the redemption of humanity, three distinct stages or periods have been pointed out:[10]

The Period of Preparation
The Period of Realization
The Period of Application

Preparation.

The Period of Preparation extends from the Fall of Man to the Birth of Christ. This is the period in which the world was being prepared for the coming of Him Who should, by His own person and work, lay the foundation for the salvation of man. The entire Old Testament story deals with this period. As has been explained already, the manner of God's dealings with all races is not set forth in detail in the Old Testament, but only His dealings with Israel. We may well believe, however, that the whole world was being prepared for the coming of the World Saviour.

Realization.

The Period of Realization extends from the Birth of Christ to the Day of Pentecost. This

[10] Rev. Gerhardus Vos, D. D.

HISTORY OF HUMAN REDEMPTION

THE FALL INCARNATION PENTECOST WORLD EVANGELIZED CONSUMMATION.

PERIOD OF PREPARATION	PERIOD OF REALIZATION	PERIOD OF APPLICATION	GOD'S GREAT NEXT
CHIEFLY THE JEWISH NATION	JESUS CHRIST	THE CHURCH	
OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE	GOSPELS AND ACTS	ACTS & CHURCH HISTORY	REVELATION
OVER 4000 YEARS OF AUTHENTIC HISTORY	THIRTY-THREE TO THIRTY-FIVE YEARS	TIME UNKNOWN	TIME UNKNOWN

is the period in which the salvation was realized, the life lived, the sacrifice consummated and the Spirit given, upon which rests the whole scheme of redemption. To this period relate the Gospel narratives and the first chapters of Acts.

Application.

The Period of Application extends from the Day of Pentecost to the present time. We know not how much longer this period will extend. The obedience of the Church will be a determining factor here. This is the period in which the Salvation, prepared for in the first period, realized in the second, is carried to all the world and applied to human life and its needs. This is the period in which we live, and it possesses, therefore, a peculiar interest to us. The New Testament, from the early chapters of the Acts through the Epistle of Jude, relates chiefly to the activities of this period.

The question forces itself upon us, Are there not other periods and stages in the unfolding of God's great Plan? Undoubtedly there are, there must be. We may include them all under the general heading, God's Great Next. What that period will involve, whether it breaks up into subordinate periods, what its character and glory will be, are matters hinted at chiefly in the Book of Revelation, and also in many other isolated prophecies.

The Order Important.

5. It is important to observe that in the unfolding of God's great Plan, not only are the several stages of great importance, but the order of these stages is extremely important too. This is so in all spheres of life and work. The farmer must not only plough and sow and reap, but he must do these things in the right order. The house builder cannot build his walls until the foundations are laid. In individual salvation, sanctification is not possible until after justification and regeneration. So with God's great Plan of world redemption, the order of the several periods is important, for one period cannot be ushered in and will not be ushered in until the preceding period has been completed. In thinking of these periods and of their completion, we must not think of them so much in terms of Time as in terms of certain conditions to be fulfilled. The Scriptures frequently intimate that with God Time has no existence. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."[11] Philosophy teaches the same truth. God's decrees and plans are to be thought of, then, not so much as resting on blocks of Time,—so many centuries which we must wait to have elapse,—as on the fulfilment of certain conditions. When these conditions are fulfilled, He Who waiteth to "see of the travail of His

[11] II Peter 3: 8; Cf. Heb. 4: 6-8.

soul" will delay not one moment in ushering in His next dispensation. Until these conditions are fulfilled, He will wait; not without continuing to work for the desired end, but yet He will wait. It is this truth that gives a place to human faithfulness and earnestness and obedience in the unfolding of God's great Plan.[12]

6. To understand God's Plan of human redemption and to appreciate the unfolding of the Plan, it is necessary to recognize certain elements in the problem which God undertook to solve.

The Problem of Sin.

(a) First of all, there was Sin. That was a supreme element in the problem. Its nature, its character, its extent, the damage it wrought,—all these facts determined the need for a certain kind of redemption. It is not necessary to enlarge here upon the character of sin, for its real nature will be revealed as God's Plan for overcoming sin is unfolded in these studies. Two needs, growing out of Sin, became such important elements in the problem of human redemption that they call for special mention.

(b) There was the need for a Revelation of Truth. Man, even in his original state, undoubtedly needed to advance in his knowledge of God. But with the Fall, so perverted did his nature become that the need for a divine revelation became

[12] I Peter 3: 8-13.

doubly great, and the problem of imparting to him knowledge became tenfold more difficult. Yet a revelation of God and of Truth was indispensable, if man was to be saved.

(c) There was also the need for a work of Atonement for Sin. Something needed to be done to set right all that had gone wrong through man's sin. How much that is, the human mind cannot fully apprehend. But its full measure is found in Christ's work and sacrifice. What needed to be done, was done by Him.

The Problem of Free Will.

(d) Another element in the problem of saving man was man's free will. At no point does God's Plan do violence to man's free will. And this element of the problem is always found to be one of supreme difficulty. Where God's Plan works alone through a perfect agency or agent, how quickly that Plan moves. The Period of Realization is one in which Christ works *alone,* and how short this period is—one brief life-time of thirty-three years! In the Period of Preparation God works *with man* for the forwarding of the Plan. How slow seem the movements of that period. In the Period of Application, God again works *with man.* How slow is His Agency, the Church, to do His will.

Each Life Alone.

(e) Another element in the problem was to deal, through all the ages, with each life so that each life may have a fair chance. Just how this

is accomplished we do not always understand, but the Scriptures teach that in His dealings with whole races and nations and in His far-off unfolding movements, God deals justly, fairly and graciously also with every individual soul.[13] It cannot then be said of God, as it has been said of Nature,

> "So careful of the type, she seems
> So careless of the single life."

Social and National Life.

(f) Another element in the problem was the reverse of the foregoing, to deal with the social, communal or national life, while dealing also with individual life. The individual cannot realize his fullest development alone. He draws his viewpoint, his assumption, his underlying principles of life from the society of which he is a part. If he cut himself off from his fellows, his development becomes narrow and unbalanced. God's Plan involved saving communities and nations as well as individuals, and this constituted a difficult element in the problem of world redemption, but one which must be recognized if we would understand the oftentimes slow unfolding of that Plan.

Could God solve these problems? How the angels themselves must have looked with astonishment and despair at the awful tragedy of Sin

[13] Rom. 1: 18-20; Ps. 145: 8, 9; Isa. 57: 15; Acts 10: 34, 35.

overwhelming God's noblest creation, Humanity! With what holy wonder at the wisdom and love of God, they must follow God's majestic work of redemption! It is ours also to look upon this divine Plan for World Redemption.

CHAPTER II.

The Period of Preparation

"O Thou to Whom a thousand years
Are but a day, how short appears
The measure of a century's span,
In carrying out Thy sovereign plan!

"A plan eternal in its scope,
Immortal in its radiant hope,
Dimly to Abram first revealed,
Alone in old Chaldea's field.

"The glorious theme the prophets taught,
Their souls aflame with God's great thought,
Through long, slow centuries rolling by
With leisure of eternity."

—"American Board Centennial Hymn,"
by Frances J. Dyer.

"The key to understanding all God's dark dealings through the ages is simply a universal love going out in redemptive purpose."—*W. O. Carver.*

II

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION

A Bright Beginning.

THE Bible narrative begins with the story of Creation. It is a story which sheds a bright and saving light down all the dark ages which form a part of human history, for the Bible story of Creation reads, "God created man in His own image." There stands that original fact of human life, undeniable, unchangeable, full of hope. To be sure the story of the Fall follows hard upon the story of Creation, but the fact remains, that man *was* created by God in the image of God. There is hope in that thought, there is comfort. Put alongside of this Bible narrative the words of one who tried to solve the riddle of life without God, and the radiant light of the Bible narrative will appear more clearly. "I know of no study," wrote Professor Huxley, "which is so unutterably saddening as that of the evolution of humanity as set forth in the annals of history. Out of the darkness of prehistoric ages man emerges with the marks of his lowly origin strong upon him. He is a brute, only more intelligent than the other brutes; a blind prey to impulses which as often

as not lead him to destruction; a victim to endless illusions which make his mental existence a terror, and fill his physical life with barren toil and battle."

In God's Image.

It is a significant fact that in the very Book in which evil is painted in its blackest colors and sin receives its greatest condemnation, the origin of the human race is set forth in words so radiant with hope, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . . And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him."

If there is comfort in this fact of creation for any, the comfort belongs to all. For it was not a certain select race that God created in His own image. It was man, the common stock from which all of humanity springs. There is a universal relationship established here by creation between man and God, and that relationship is the inheritance and assurance of all mankind.

The Fall.

Then comes the story of the Fall. It is a simple story of disobedience, of wilful disobedience. "There are two places in the Bible," says Dr. Henry Van Dyke, "where the entrance of evil and the fall of man are described—and they both teach the same lesson. Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son[1] is just as true, just as significant, as the story of Adam's lost Paradise. In both

[1] Luke 15: 11.

stories the entrance of the evil is through self-will—blind, perverse, ruinous, but free, and therefore responsible. In both stories the nature of the evil is rebellion, self-injury, separation from God."

The results of the Fall are summed up in the Bible narrative in the words, "Therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground whence he was taken."[2] And man went out from the presence of God. So sin spelled separation from God, and shame, and guilt, and fear, and punishment, and pain, and a disordered nature. And it meant this for all the race. Would man ever get back into the presence of God? It seemed hopeless, impossible.

The Plan Launched.

Just then God launched His Plan for World Redemption. The first announcement of it was not made to man, although made in his presence. It was made to that Power and Personification of Evil which seemed at that moment ready to glory in the thwarting of God's purposes. "And Jehovah said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."[3] Thus was heralded the coming, far down the centuries, of One Who, "bruised for our transgressions," became the Emancipator of humanity from sin.

[2] Gen. 3: 9-24.
[3] Gen. 3: 15.

For the further study of God's dealings with man and the unfolding of His Redemptive Plan, it will be found convenient to divide the historical narrative of the Scriptures into periods.

I. *The Period Before Abraham*

The Race as a Whole.

During this period, God's method is portrayed as dealing with the race as a whole. It is not implied that at any time God's love was narrower than the whole race,[4] but, as will be seen, there was in later periods a selection, that the purposes of God might be worked out through the few for the benefit of the many. We are so familiar with this later method that it may be necessary to emphasize the apparently universal method of the first period.

"The earlier revelations of God," says Fairbairn, "made no difference between one person and another, or even between one stem and another. They spoke the same language and held out the same invitations to all." It is interesting to find that the comparative study of religions helps to corroborate the view that all of humanity shared in certain primal revelations. Where races have been cut off from the later streams of divine revelation, study shows that the early periods of

[4] Amos. 9 : 7.

these races were the best and that the later periods were marked by degeneration.[5]

Whatever divine revelations or providential dealings are recorded of this first period, they are all represented then as extending to the whole race without discrimination, unless it be that discrimination was the result of individual responsiveness.[6] Humanity is represented as one in creation, in the fall, in the knowledge of sacrificial worship,[7] in the example set for it by God for the observance of a weekly rest day,[8] in its ability to enjoy fellowship with God,[9] in the judgment of God upon it because of sin,[10] in the covenant made after the Flood.[11] None of these revelations or experiences are set forth as coming to any one man or family because of a limitation of the divine operations of grace to a certain race or tribe or family. How broad is the gracious covenant with Noah. "And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and *all flesh that is upon the earth.*"

A Downward Tendency.

But, as Fairbairn points out, "there was a downward tendency in the process. The elect

[5] Warneck's "The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism," page 10.

[6] There are some who make the particularizing of God's Plan to begin with Seth instead of with Abraham.

[7] Gen. 4: 3-7; 8: 20.

[8] Gen. 2: 2, 3.

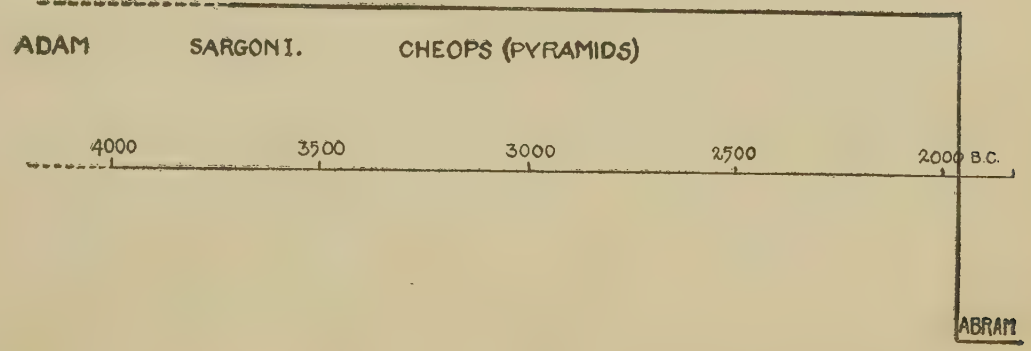
[9] Gen. 4: 26; 5: 24.

[10] Gen. 7: 23.

[11] Gen. 9: 17.

PERIOD OF PREPARATION

BEFORE ABRAHAM



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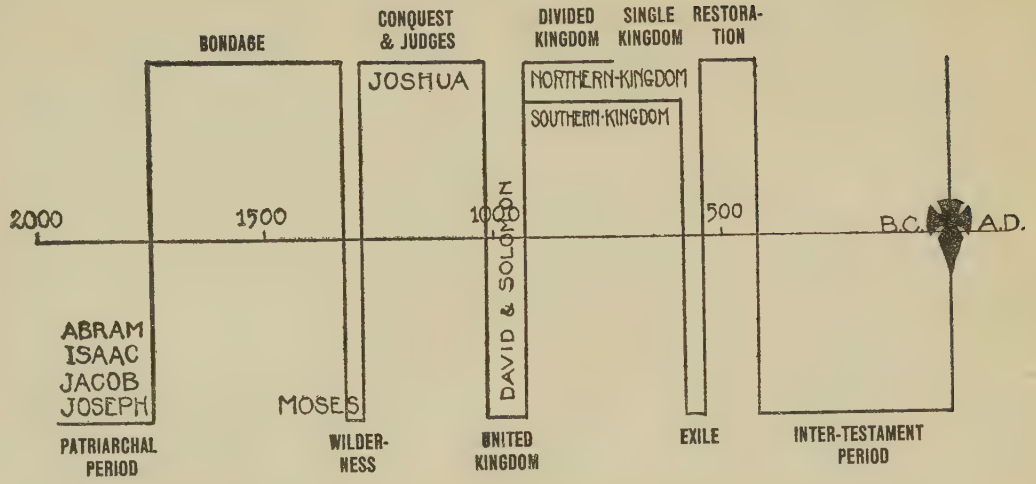


seed did not grow as time advanced, but proportionately decreased; the cause and party that flourished was the one opposed to God's. And the same result was beginning to take place after the flood, as is evident from other notices of the early appearance of corruption. The tendency in this direction was too strong to be effectually met by such general revelations and overtures of mercy. The plan was too vague and indeterminate. A more specific line of operations was needed—from the particular to the general; so that a certain amount of good, within a definite range, might in the first instance be secured; and that from this, as a fixed position, other advantages might be gained and more extensive results achieved." So there is unfolded a new method.

II. *Patriarchal Period*

One Man Chosen.

One individual man is to be selected as a channel for divine revelation, as a subject of special providential dealings, so that he and his descendants may make possible God's unfolding of His Plan for world redemption. Where will the man be found? Who will he be?

The Semitic Race.

God's elections are always in harmony with a divine fitness which His wisdom has prepared and therefore uses. We go to distant Babylonia. Here dwelt a Semitic race. "Comparative psychology plainly teaches this much, namely that

the Shemites were more adapted by nature than other peoples—their equals or superiors in culture—to see the absolute in the finite, the working of God in nature, His action in history, and to hear His words in the inner spiritual life of individuals." God selected a Shemite, who lived not far from where the Tigris and the Euphrates flow together, in a city called Ur of the Chaldees. This was about 2000 B. C. In the course of time, the family moved to Haran to live. The reasons for the change are not given, but it was a great journey for those days,—some five hundred miles north-west. That the family was religious, we know. That they were idolators, we also know.[13] Could a pure religion be unfolded in such an atmosphere? Manifestly not. "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto the land that I will show thee."

The Divine Call.

It was some four hundred miles to the south-west to Canaan. Hostile peoples lived there. Abraham's company, all told, would scarcely command respect as a caravan. They had not yet grown to the proportions of a tribe. Why exchange the certainties of Haran for the uncertainties of an unnamed land? It was a critical moment, but we read, "So Abram went, as Jeho-

[13] Josh. 24: 2.

vah had spoken unto him." And upon the hinges of this man's life, God swung a movement for world redemption. The Plan for world redemption was well under way.

A Great Career.

The story of Abraham's life is given in some thirteen chapters.[13] "The great outstanding events of his career were his call, his magnanimous treatment of Lot, his intercession for Sodom, his offering of Isaac, and his purchase of a burial place from the sons of Heth." There were limitations and weaknesses in his character. Twice he dissimulated concerning Sarah his wife, to Pharaoh [14] and to Abimelech;[15] and God used these heathen rulers to rebuke Abraham for his disloyalty to truth. It is not his limitations, however, but his virtues, that impress us most. He was the great Pioneer of Faith. This quality which characterizes above all else our Christian religion of to-day,[16] this quality which runs like a golden thread through the narrative of God's Plan for world redemption [17] and which leads men unerringly into the very presence of God, this quality, *faith,* Abraham had in a degree that has inspired the ages. He gave a first splendid exhibition of it when he left home and country. He showed it in his patient waiting for God to give him a land of Canaan which had been prom-

[13] Gen. 12: 1-25: 10.
[14] Gen. 12: 10-20.
[15] Gen. 20: 1-18.
[16] Rom. 5: 1.
[17] Heb. 11.

ised to him. He displayed this same quality awaiting a miraculous fulfilment of the promise that to him a son should be born, though he was past a hundred years of age and Sarah was past ninety. He again displayed this quality in a supreme test, when bidden to offer up his son Isaac.

The Providence of God.

To save him from an evil environment God led him out of Ur to Haran, and out of Haran to Canaan, and out of Canaan to Egypt, and out of Egypt back to Canaan. These providential movings broadened his vision and his sympathies, but they also kept his life and the life of his family isolated. Strangeness prevented too great intimacy or intercourse with the surrounding peoples. Again and again did God reveal himself to Abraham, making known to him His divine character and methods.

The Purpose of it all.

It is well worth while to notice, at the close of Abraham's life, along how many different lines progress had been made in the unfolding of God's Plan:

(a) All the rich content of early revelation was to be safeguarded for all the future by the selection of this religious Shemite. It is really wonderful how much of God must have been known even before God's special dealings with Abraham added to this knowledge.

(b) A man had been discovered who would

serve as the founder of a race in whose life God's will might have a determining influence. Abraham's readiness to subject his life plans to the will of God, established a standard of obedience to the divine will which powerfully influenced all his posterity in their tribal and national development.

(c) A human channel had been found for the continuous and progressive revelation of truth. To Abraham's posterity God would be able to make advancing revelations of Himself without having, as it were, to begin over again with each generation.

(d) A human agency had been found whose standards of morality, even though often imperfectly realized, would serve as a witness to God's holiness, and save a rapidly deteriorating world from utter moral ruin and decay.

(e) A deep, abiding impression of the reality of God had been made upon at least one family among men. Abraham believed that God was, and that He was a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The supreme fact of his life was God.

The Missionary End.

(f) Good progress had been made in revealing the great missionary purpose of God and the world-wide reach of His Plan. Again and again the changes are rung upon the all-inclusive scope of the covenant of blessing, "In thee shall *all* the

families of the earth be blessed." It was the missionary heart of Abraham that led him to plead even for so dissolute and abandoned a race as that of Sodom. He had learned from his God.

Isaac. The life of Isaac was uneventful. He, too, had revelations from God.[18] He, too, was obedient to those revelations. But on the whole little is recorded. Of Isaac's two sons, Jacob is the one through whom God chose to unfold His Plan.

Jacob. The Bible narrative dwells at length upon the events of his life. There is not space here to refer to these events individually. An acquaintance with them must be assumed. The aim here is only to emphasize those most vitally related to the unfolding of the divine Plan. Jacob.

God's Plan called for worthy characters and lives to whom His truth might be revealed and by whom it might also be realized. Now Jacob was a strange combination of worthy and unworthy traits. "He was coarse, selfish and passionate, having business capacity, but also possessed of a religious nature which was capable of great development. He coveted the best gifts. He had fixed religious principles. He was steady in his habits. The struggle that went on within him was a long and fierce one; but grace conquered, and Jacob, 'the Overreacher,' became Israel, 'the

[18] Gen. 26: 2-6.

Prince with God'." If the purposes of God are to swing upon the hinges of any life, that life must be purified. God cleansed Jacob's life, and he stands before us, "a miracle of grace."

Revelation Advancing.

Meanwhile, divine revelation was advancing. The sense of the reality of God was deepening. At Bethel, Jacob realized God's presence.[19] At Peniel, he felt God's grip upon his life.[20] At Bethel again, he heard God's voice.[21] The great lesson of prevailing intercession is taught at Peniel. The sacred obligation of the tithe, recognizing God's sovereignty in human wealth, receives a renewed emphasis in Jacob's sacred covenant.[22] How vital are these lessons in the unfolding of the divine Plan! And, finally, the universal scope of God's beneficent purposes is emphasized afresh, and, in the vision at Bethel, Jacob hears the covenant renewed, "In thee and in thy seed shall *all* the families of the earth be blessed."

III. *Life in Egypt*

Down to Egypt.

During the latter years of Jacob's life, his family increased in numbers not only by the marriage of his children and grandchildren, but by the family's increase in wealth, which meant the addition of quite a community of servants and attendants who attached themselves to the family

[19] Gen. 28: 10-22.
[20] Gen. 32: 24-30.
[21] Gen. 35: 9-15.
[22] Gen. 28: 22.

for life. The time had come for a great turning movement in God's providential dealings with Abraham's posterity. Jacob's family is to be lifted out of Canaan and carried down to Egypt, where the foundations of a national life are to be laid. A tribe, and not merely a family, is the human agency with which God now deals. We have to do with the Israelites and not merely with Jacob. The problem becomes more complicated, but the results are to be more glorious, for the wisdom and power of God are to be revealed both on a larger scale and in more intricate ways than when a single individual or a single family were the objects of His guidance and care.

The Methods of God.

The steps by which this great change of environment was effected, are narrated in the last fourteen chapters of Genesis and constitute an almost unparalleled illustration of the inscrutable wisdom of God in His providential dealings, whereby each individual life is carried forward by a special guidance suited to its own needs, while, at the same time, the larger purposes of God for whole communities and nations are also accomplished.

The purposes of God in leading Israel into Egypt may be summarized as follows:

Away from Evil.

(a) There was evident need to get away from the degrading moral atmosphere of Canaan. Israel was not yet strong enough to conquer the

land and cleanse it by conquest. To live alongside of such pits of iniquity as Sodom was demoralizing. Egyptian life was not a model of morality but it was an improvement upon Canaan, and in any case, a change would make evil influences less insidious.

(b) At least the beginnings of national life were to be developed, and the greatest civilization of those early days might well make its contribution to Israel's thought and national conceptions.

(c) If this overgrown family, this undeveloped tribe, Israel, was to pass naturally and easily through the several stages of its adolescent national life, there was need for placing it under the protection of a well established empire, where it might be set free from the constant warfares and conflicts of such petty nations as existed in Canaan.

A Remarkable Coincidence.

A remarkable combination of providences brought Israel to Egypt. A famine in Canaan brought the chief men of Israel to Egypt in search for food. A dynasty of Shepherd Kings, who by ancestry and occupation would be favorable to these descendants of Abraham, claimed the throne of Egypt. These two providences united in bringing about the settlement of Israel in the Nile Valley.

The sojourn in Egypt lasted some four centuries. During the early part of this sojourn, the

Israelites enjoyed every favor and advantage. During the latter part they were grievously oppressed.

Ends Accomplished.

The sojourn in Egypt served its providential purpose. In the safety and security of life in Egypt, the family of Jacob multiplied most rapidly. Under no other circumstances is it conceivable that there should have been such an increase in numbers. The Israelites also developed a national organization of a clearly defined sort. There were distinct tribes; twelve of these. Within the tribe, there were princes by birth. (Ex. 16: 22). Also elders (Ex. 4: 29). Also priests (Ex. 19: 22). Also civil officers imposed by Pharaoh (Ex. 5: 6). So effective was this organization that Moses was able to quickly communicate with all Israel by making use of it (Ex. 4: 29; 12: 21).

Perils in Egypt.

But the sojourn in Egypt was not without its perils. In the midst of a materially-minded people, would Israel preserve its spiritual life? Under the shadow of a great world empire would Israel preserve the thought of a sovereign God? Enjoying the material prosperity of life in the Nile Delta, would Israel be mindful of the Canaan inheritance? Living alongside of a people only moderately moral, would Israel hold to the highest standards of righteousness? Living in the midst of a people whose religion was ex-

tremely ceremonial and quite idolatrous, would Israel hold to a religion of reality and worship none other than Jehovah God, the Spirit?[23]

God's Answer.

These were serious questions. How could they be answered? In the providence of God, they were answered by a change of dynasty which brought into power "a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." Oppression followed, cruel, deliberate, purposeful, aiming at nothing short of the complete enslavement and possibly the extinction of the Israelites. Here was punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness to God, but here also was the removal of all danger from amalgamation. To be a Hebrew was to be branded, and the Egyptians would have naught to do with such, while those of this oppressed race were drawn closer together by the very sorrows of their oppression. How necessary this oppression was for the accomplishment of the divine purposes may be realized, when we remember that, even so, it was with difficulty that Israel was made willing to go forth from the Land of Bondage.[24]

Then follows that remarkable series of supernatural events which God wrought for the redemption of Israel from the power of Egypt. It is a story full of interest. Nowhere in history is there a succession of scenes of such dramatic

[23] Joshua 24: 14.

[24] Ex. 14: 11-12; 16: 3.

power as these portrayed in the first fifteen chapters of the Book of Exodus. They should be read anew, as the significance of these events, following the sojourn in Egypt, are now noted:

National Consciousness.

(a) A nation awakes to its national and religious unity. Its families had had common experience of suffering and one common deliverance from oppression. Israel has one God, one worship. Israel is one.

(b) The nation recognizes that it stands in a peculiar relationship to God. God has a distinct interest in their national life and theirs is a covenant relationship with God.

(c) God is a God of supreme power. "Jehovah is a man of war." "He hath triumphed gloriously." Never was the power of this revelation completely lost in the history of Israel. When the fires of patriotism or of national faith burned low, it was to this deliverance by power that the prophets harked back, and with the memory of it they again and again fanned into flame the dying courage of the nation.

Silence on World Purpose.

(d) Just because this period deals with the deliverance of Israel from all but total extinction, there is not much said about the extension of blessing to all the world. It is a question of saving from obliteration the very agency through which the world blessing is to come. Yet there is a development of this religious conception;

Jehovah's rule extends not only to His people who recognize His sway. It reaches with power and judgment to all nations who oppose His purposes, as these purposes find their concrete expression in His will for His chosen Israel.[25] This is a *world vision,* though it is one of judgment and not of blessing.

IV. *Life in the Wilderness*

Short but Significant.

This period extends over forty years. This is but one-tenth of the length of the former period. But God does not measure periods by years. One day may be with Him as a thousand years, and this period seems to be vastly more significant in the unfolding of God's Plan than the period which preceded it. It will be easier to study it, if we consider, first, the development of Israel's life, and, secondly, the divine revelations which belong to this period. It must be recognized, however, that these two subjects are vitally related to each other.

Deep Impressions.

1. *The Development of Israel's Life.* Forty years of wilderness life would naturally make certain deep impressions. There would be physical training in it. Long weary desert marches would produce a hardening of the muscles, and a wiry strength, which residence in Egypt could not develop. The Israelites ere long would be

[25] Ex. 14: 18; 15: 14-16.

"in training." More important would be a new sense of independence and liberty, such as life under the shadow of a great Empire would scarcely encourage and such as the days of oppression in Egypt wholly shut out. More important yet was the opportunity for apprehending the reality of Jehovah's presence and leadership. The desert environment is naturally more stimulating to the thought of God, than are the conditions of a very populous country; there are greater opportunities for thought and meditation. And the very presence of Israel in the desert, out from under the Egyptian yoke of bondage, was a constant reminder of the reality of Jehovah God. To this were added repeated if not constant proofs of His manifest presence and power: the quails, and the manna, and the water issuing from the rock. To the most thoughtless and sceptical, God must have seemed a reality. It was part of the divine purpose that this profound religious conception should be burned into the life of the nation, until God should become a commonly recognized assumption of life.

Imperfect Response.

The mistake must not be made to think that Israel responded perfectly to the divine efforts for the development of its life. On the contrary, there was disobedience and disloyalty and open rebellion. Once, and that in the midst of a great

religious convocation, the people gave themselves up to idolatry. It is a vivid commentary upon their former life in Egypt. None too soon had they been brought out of that environment. Only the intercession of Moses and the most severe measures of punishment availed to prevent the abandonment of the chosen race by God. Again, the time came to enter the Promised Land. The people stood over against Kadesh-Barnea. It seemed the will of God that they should enter in and possess the land. In His providence, a political situation existed which made it seem "the time of times" to enter Canaan with the least opposition. Were there enough brave hearts in Israel to dare do it? The people wavered. With undaunted courage and faith Caleb hurled himself into the breach. "We are well able," was his rallying cry. It was the modern missionary rallying cry, anticipated by three thousand years: "We can do it, if we will." But Israel *would not,* and was turned back into the wilderness for some forty years. A generation later, the slower and more painful conquest was accomplished, not by way of the South for that opportunity had passed, but by way of the Jordan. Again and again, the inspired writers hold up this portion of history to reveal the way in which human disobedience holds back and

A Missionary Rallying Cry.

thwarts the rapid unfolding of the divine Plan.[26] If men will not take God's straight and easy way, which lies always in the direction of perfect obedience, He must needs lead them by a longer and more painful way.

Divine Revelations.

2. *Divine Revelations*: The Wilderness Period may be set down as the most important period in the history of Israel in the revelation of divine truth. It is true that the period of the great prophets falls very little behind this period in its contributions of divine revelation. Yet the revelations of the Wilderness Period are so fundamental, so unique, so original, so comprehensive, so inexhaustible, that much of the prophetic material of the later periods seems but an elaboration of the truths revealed in the Wilderness Period.

It is impossible, of course, within our limits to detail the content of divine revelation which came through Moses. The latter part of Exodus, and the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are taken up with the narration of these revealed laws.

Almost all the fundamental conceptions of our Christian religion found statement or symbolical illustration in the revelations contained in these books of the Pentateuch. The study of these is a work by itself and whole volumes have been

[26] Ps. 106; 95; Acts 7: 1-53.

written on the subject. Only the following religious conceptions can be noted here:

Monotheism.

(a) Jehovah is the one and only true God. This doctrine of one God, *monotheism,* had been held even before Abraham's time, but in the Wilderness Period it was consciously recognized as the supreme fact in Israel's religion, and idolatry was denounced as disloyalty to Jehovah. Ex. 20: 1-6; 32: 1-35; 34: 10-17. Lev. 24: 10-23. Deut. 5: 6-10; 6: 4-5.

A Holy God.

(b) Jehovah God is holy, and requires of His people obedience to His holy laws. This truth was one of the most elaborated and most emphasized of all teachings of the Wilderness Period. It was necessary to lay such emphasis upon it. The God of Israel was different from all gods chiefly in this: He was a God of holiness. The conception was fundamental to the whole scheme of redemption. Without the recognition of sin, there can be no recognition of the need for salvation. So emphasis was laid upon moral distinctions in every possible way: in distinctions between the clean and the unclean in the physical sphere, in matters of food and clothing and residence and sickness; in moral laws and injunctions; and finally in all the strict rules and regulations relating to the Sabbath, to sacrifices, and to worship in the sanctuary.[27]

[27] These references run through the whole body of laws belonging to this Period. Consult Fairbairn's "The Typology of Scripture."

(c) The necessity of sacrifice is emphasized and its meaning is elaborated and illustrated. There were at least five kinds of sacrifice instituted. The "burnt-offering" was for consecration and thanksgiving (Lev. 1). The "meal-offering" was a gift to secure God's favor (Lev. 2). The "peace-offering" symbolized friendship and fellowship (Lev. 3). The "sin-offering" was for expiation and atonement (Lev. 4: 1-5: 13). The "guilt-offering" symbolized satisfaction and reinstatement (Lev. 5: 14- 6: 7). No more important contribution to the unfolding of the Plan of World Redemption can be found than in the revelations of these Books of Moses relating to the priesthood and to sacrifice. The way was being made straight and plain which led to Calvary. Sacrifice and its Lessons.

V. *Period of Conquest and Judges*

The Period of the Conquest and of the Judges extends from about 1280 B. C. to 1050 B. C. These are twenty-three decades concerning which we know comparatively little. The purpose of God moved forward, but apparently not with great rapidity. That failure of faith at Kadesh-Barnea had to receive its just punishment in the long deferred and, even then, imperfect conquest of Canaan; while, at the same time, through the wisdom of God this punishment was

itself made to serve as a means of grace to remove the unworthy elements in the nation's character which had led to the collapse of faith at Kadesh-Barnea.

God Their Leader.

During the days of conquest, Joshua was the leader of the nation. His leadership, however, was only of a subordinate character. He ever spoke in the name of Jehovah. The Leader of Israel was none other than Jehovah Himself.[28] During these days of conquest, the sense of the reality of God was deepened; the nation became still more conscious of God's leadership, as they moved forward to victory when obeying God,[29] or fell back in confusion when disobeying Him.[30] Moral distinctions were maintained by public proclamations[31] and special enforcements.

Imperfect Obedience.

The obedience of Israel, however, to the command that the entire land be conquered, was most imperfect.[32] The result of this disobedience was, as with all disobedience, most disastrous, and God caused it to be a judgment upon Israel.[33] Alas, how the disobedience of man hinders the speedy realization of the divine ideal! Yet how marvelous is the patience of God that He bears with man's disobedience, and how marvelous His wisdom that, at last, He finds a way for the realization of His will!

[28] Josh. 5: 13-15.
[29] Josh. 6: 1-21.
[30] Josh. 7: 1-12.
[31] Josh. 8: 30-35.
[32] Judges 1: 24-34.
[33] Judges 2: 10-23; 3: 1-6.

Israel's Iron Age.

The story of Israel's life under twelve judges is given in the Book of Judges. It abounds in scenes of dramatic power and interest. This period has been called "Israel's iron age." The nation's life seemed to be a series of cycles in which disobedience to God was followed by some providential judgment; this resulted in a consciousness of sin and national repentance; then came some providential deliverer, the deliverance to be followed again by another lapse into national unfaithfulness. These judges, or heroes, were "often rude and barbaric in their methods, were rather patriotic warriors than moral reformers; and yet, under God's providence, their work in its ultimate results was more truly religious than they knew, since they helped to shape that nation whose whole history was a preparation for the coming of Christ."

Retrospect

Progress Made.

Before passing on, it is well to look back and notice the progress which has been made in the Period of Preparation in so far as this Period has been studied. In the millenniums before Abraham, God is represented as dealing for the most part directly with the whole race. From Adam to Noah there was steady deterioration of the race. A new start was made with Noah, but again there was deterioration. The race as

a whole would not respond to this method of direct and universal dealing.

An individual was then selected, Abraham. The individual became a family, the family a tribe, the tribe a nation. Not uniformly, not perfectly, yet without any complete lapse, this human channel for divine revelation was kept, throughout a millennium and a half, true to the divine purposes for which it had been selected. The elements of true religion had been revealed, moral standards of life and conduct had been embodied in human laws, and modes of worship, for the most part only symbolical as yet, had been prescribed.

Was It Worth While?

Was this progress worthy or unworthy of the millennium which had elapsed since God's call to Abraham? When we remember the frailty of the human agency through which God worked, when we remember the reluctance, the disloyalty, the disobedience, the sinful wilfulness of man, as God sought to lead him on farther and faster, we can but marvel that such good progress was made. As we think of the slight progress of two millenniums of the Christian era in the full light of divine revelation, the temptation to criticise this earlier era passes away. Man is not straitened in God. He is straitened only in himself.

CHAPTER III

Later Preparatory Days

"If the Old Testament teaches in Genesis the universal creatorship of God; if in the first commandment it demands His worship alone; if in its definition of God it makes Him all in all; if the very name it uses for an idol signifies nothingness; if in Psalms and Prophets it summons all the ends of the earth to praise Him; if it narrates the divine attempt in Ruth and Jonah to turn the Jews from Pharisees into missionaries, then it does not for a moment permit us to rest in the doctrine of the ancient or the modern Pharisees that the kingdom of heaven on earth belongs to a particular race. The missionary character of the Bible inheres in the very texture of the Old Testament. 'And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'"—*Bishop J. W. Bashford.*

III

LATER PREPARATORY DAYS

THE Old Testament records which remain to be considered cover some six hundred years of the Hebrew nation's life. So extended is the time to be dealt with and so detailed the historical record, that it is only possible to touch on the main events of the nation's life, passing by for the most part all biographical sketches. To these six centuries belongs the story of almost all the books of the Old Testament which follow the eighth chapter of I Samuel.

VI. *Period of the United Kingdom*

Israel a Kingdom.

By way of Samuel, that last and magnificent personality belonging to the order of Judges, and Saul, the first and most disappointing of all the kings of Israel, the Hebrew nation entered upon the last stage of national development and became a kingdom.

Three kings only were permitted to rule over a united kingdom: Saul, David, Solomon. Under David and then under Solomon, the Hebrew kingdom reached a wonderful development. Sur-

rounding nations were conquered; the Philistines, Moab, Hadadezer king of Zobah, the Edomites, the Ammonites, Amalek—these all, at the hand of David. Under Solomon, the kingdom developed great material resources, numerous buildings and public works were undertaken, the great Temple of Solomon was built, a political policy of daring scope was adopted, and the fame of the Hebrew kingdom and of its king reached to distant lands. The Queen of Sheba[1] came "from the ends of the earth" to visit this seat of renown and left as a proof of her admiration some three million dollars' worth of gold. "If we ask what were some of the beautiful things which the Queen of Sheba beheld, the record leads us to conclude that on every hand there was a great display of gold (from Ophir), and silver (probably from the mines of Spain and Asia Minor), precious stones and spices (from Arabia), almug trees or sandalwood (from India), ivory (from India and eastern Africa), cedarwood (from Lebanon), a temple inlaid with pure gold, palaces and stairways beautifully ornamented, an endless array of servants and cupbearers, gorgeous apparel, a rich cuisine, drinking-vessels of gold, officers in costly uniform, and horses and chariots; in short, a capital worthy of a king whose wisdom and splendor eclipsed

The Queen of Sheba.

[1] Matt. 12: 42; I K. 10; 2 Chron. 9.

at the time all the other potentates of earth."[2] It seems a far cry from the turbulent days of the Conquest, only some two centuries back, to this "Golden Age" of the Hebrew nation.

The Kingdom and the Plan.

This national experience which made of the Hebrew nation a kingdom and a monarchy, bore a very vital relation to the unfolding of the divine Plan. It was a development sanctioned finally by divine revelation, although at first the motives of the people who desired a king were denounced as unworthy. Among the services rendered by this national development were the following:

(a) The religion of the nation found a more splendid setting and a more abiding center in the magnificent Temple of Solomon. This was built by divine sanction and must have added materially to the prestige of the religion of Jehovah both within and beyond the limits of the Hebrew nation.

World-Wide Witness.

(b) By its wider political contacts and influence, the Hebrew nation became almost a world-wide witness to heathen nations, both in behalf of high standards of morality and in behalf of that religion which recognizes Jehovah as the only true God.

(c) The new kingdom ideas and the new kingdom experiences of the nation served as a canvas on which could be painted those higher

[2] G. L. Robinson's "Leaders of Israel."

spiritual conceptions concerning the Kingdom of God; David became the type of the coming King. The things that were, and which proved both imperfect and transient, led forward to the thing which was yet to be, and which would be both perfect and abiding.

(d) The religious conceptions of the Hebrew nation were being broadened, and reached out beyond the limits of Palestine. For the providences of God were co-operating with the Spirit of God in enlarging the sympathies of Israel.

The Missionary Conception.

We may well ask here, How clearly did the religious leaders of this period realize the world-wide scope of the religion which they held as a national faith? In one sense, it matters not greatly whether they fully realized this world-wide scope or not, save as it might affect their own kindly disposition toward their heathen neighbors, or their own conception of God as a world God. It would be sufficient for us to know, as we do, that God's purposes *were* world-wide, whether the Hebrew nation realized it or not. Yet the question may be answered, and it may be answered out of the literature of this period.

A World Creator.

First, God is recognized as related to the whole world as Creator. Is it objected that this is only a material or physical relationship? So be it. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that

which is natural; then that which is spiritual." "As in all the spheres of divine operation," says Dr. James Orr, "grace invariably presupposes nature, so it is in this." The unqualified ascription to God of the creation of all things prepares the way for the assertion and the recognition of His ownership of all things; and this thought of divine ownership is a necessary foundation which must be laid securely before we pass on to the thought of a divinely projected Kingdom. Even your benevolent philanthropist must first establish his proprietorship over a given property before he may project upon it his plans for its improvement.

Note then how God is declared to be Creator of all things: The heavens are the work of His fingers; the moon and the stars are ordained by Him (Ps. 8: 3). The firmament is His handiwork (Ps. 19: 1). The son of man is His creation (Ps. 8: 5). As Creator, Jehovah is vested with full rights of ownership: "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it" (Ps. 24: 12). The claim is indisputable. Thus, as Creator of the universe, Jehovah is owner of it. His ownership of it gives Him the right to project upon it His divine will.

These conceptions lie at the base of our modern missionary activity: "The earth is Jeho-

vah's." True, but His divine rights are not recognized on every side. To the Christian Church is committed to-day the task, with "the Sword of the Spirit," to conquer and bring into loving subjection the world which *is* His.

The World Judge.

Secondly. God is recognized as related to the whole world as Moral Judge. This, too, is a conception which makes the scope of religion world-wide and leads to the missionary idea.

Jehovah is no tribal or racial God, who sets up petty and artificial standards of life and conduct adapted only to a given age or race. Here is a God of essential righteousness, Whose laws and standards, essential like Himself, go forth into every age and place, testing every creature, regardless of rank or riches, of color or caste, of tribe or tongue. Among others, the following are the fundamental moral demands which Jehovah God makes: Cleanness of hands, obedience (Ps. 18: 20, 21), purity, righteousness (Ps. 19: 8, 9), truth (Ps. 25: 5), loving kindness, faithfulness (Ps. 36: 5).

He Goes Forth to Judge.

Neither is this moral code alone *fitted* to world-wide application, but Jehovah God is represented as *actually going forth* with this moral code *to judge men* and their works by it—not Israelites alone, but men generally: "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek

after God" (Ps. 14: 2). "Jehovah, His throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men" (Ps. 11: 4). "Jehovah looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men from the place of His habitation. He looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth" (Ps. 33: 13, 14). "Thou sittest in the throne judging righteously. Thou hast rebuked the nations. Thou hast destroyed the wicked" (Ps. 9: 4, 5).

The Kingdom of God.

There are also explicit statements setting forth a world-wide Kingdom, the Kingdom of God among men. The Kingdom of God is, of course, sometimes identified with the kingdom of Israel, but we are told of the world-wide extent of the Kingdom: "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Ps. 2: 8). We know the divine character of the Kingdom's King: "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2: 7). We see His just rule: "He will judge the world in righteousness" (Ps. 9: 8). We are told of a twofold method of extending and establishing the Kingdom: force and persuasion. In some cases, force is depicted as at work: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2: 8, 9). In Ps. 36: 5-12, sua-

sion is the compelling motive, although judgment accompanies it. If we turn to the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, we shall read words of surpassing beauty in their broad sympathy for the alien.[3]

An Early Fulfilment.

When so much of God's will and purpose and methods was apprehended by the head of the Hebrew nation, when such gratifying progress was being made in the unfolding of the divine Plan in and through the chosen Hebrew race, did it not seem as if, quickly now, the purposes of God might be realized, and Christ's coming might have been anticipated by one thousand years? We do not know all the factors in the delay. We do not know whether or not the great outside world, with which God was also dealing by some other preparatory methods, was ready for the next great stage in the unfolding of the divine Plan. We do know, however, that Israel itself had not grasped even that measure of truth which needed to be revealed before the coming of Christ, neither had Israel's life realized that moral cleansing which might cradle a divine Incarnation. There was vice in the palace; doubtless there was vice in the hovel. The times were not yet fulfilled. Man was not ready. The discipline of several centuries must yet be. The messages of the prophets must yet come.

[3] I K. 8: 41-43.

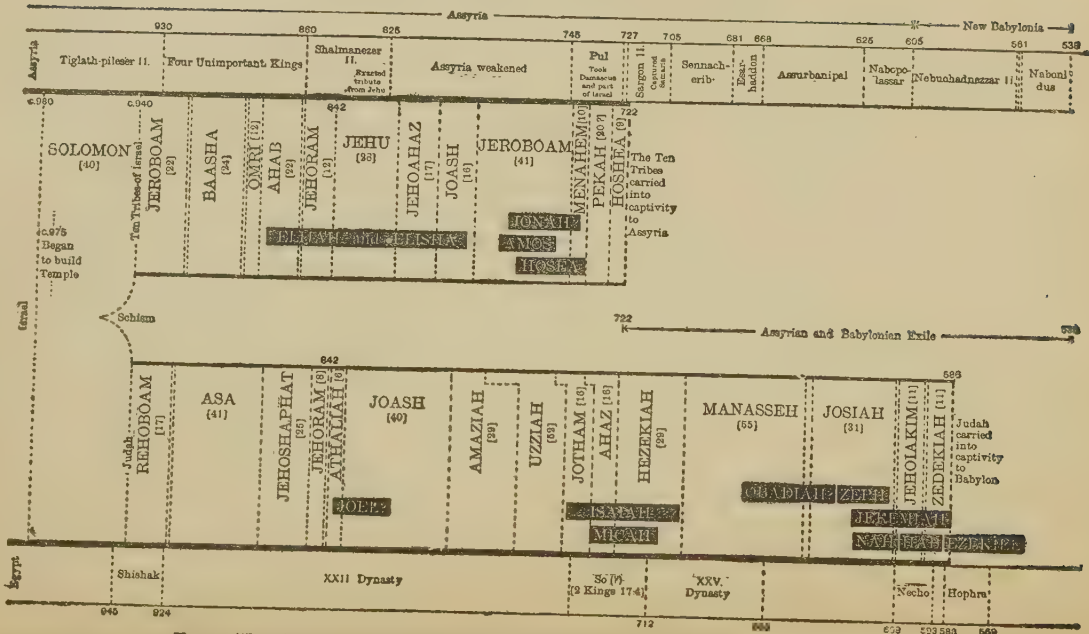
VII. *Period of the Divided Kingdom*

The Kingdom Divided.

After the death of Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was rent in twain. The event had been prophesied in the days of Solomon as a punishment for his lust and idolatry.[4] "When he died, elements of discord pervaded the kingdom. His people were oppressed by excessive taxation, made necessary by his love of magnificence and the enormous projects in which he was involved." The Northern Kingdom, including ten of the twelve tribes, was established under Jeroboam; the Southern Kingdom consisting now only of Judah and Benjamin, continued under Rehoboam. "The division of the empire was one of the great turning points in Hebrew history. By one stroke it largely undid the work of Saul and David. The old breach between the north and the south, thus opened, was never again permanently closed. The Hebrews never ceased to dream of world-wide conquest; but the actual course of history bore them to a very different goal. Each of the two Hebrew kingdoms, weakened by civil war, was henceforth exposed to almost constant attack from strong foes. As a result of these protracted wars, their strength was exhausted and they became weaker and

[4] I K. 11: 9-13.

SCHISM BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL



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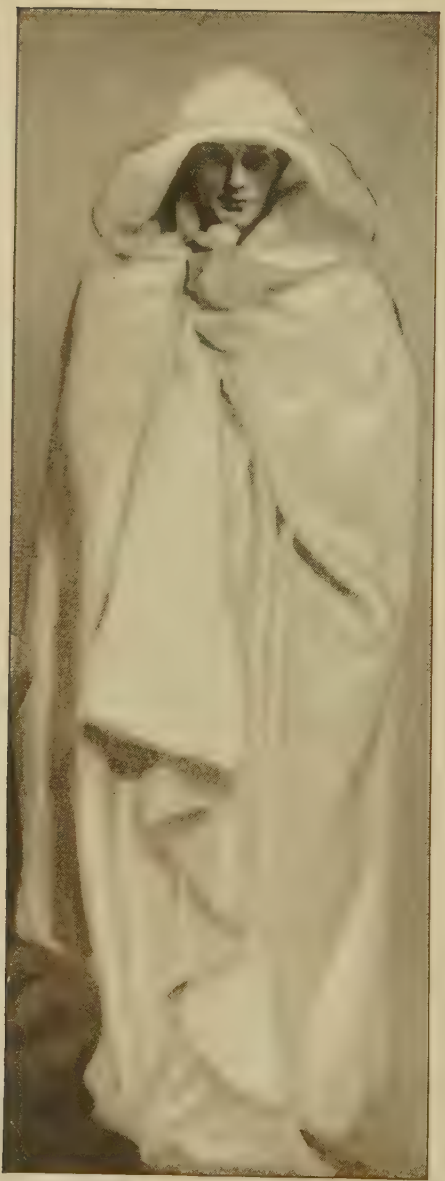


THE PERRY PICTURES. 1031. SARGENT, 1856-
BOSTON EDITION. COPYRIGHT, 1897, BY CURTIS & CAMERON.

HOSEA.

weaker until they were ground under the iron heel of the Assyrians and Babylonians."

In the North.

The Northern Kingdom. For two centuries the Northern Kingdom maintained an independent existence. During this period it had nineteen kings, but the line of succession was constantly being broken, so that these nineteen kings represent no less than nine dynasties. There seems to have been a steady moral and spiritual decline. Of the kings of the Northern Kingdom, all, with the exception of Jehu,[5] seem to have been men with unqualifiedly bad records. Like a dismal refrain it is recorded of almost all, "He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah."

Yet Jehovah was gracious to the Northern Kingdom, and stood ready to use it also as a channel for divine revelation. Lion-hearted reformers, such as Elijah and Elisha, and noble prophets, such as Amos, and Jonah (the first foreign missionary prophet), and Hosea, were commissioned either to try to stem the rising tide of immorality and godlessness, or else to minister to the further development of the nation's conception of God. Did ever the missionary heart of God reveal itself more perfectly than in the narrative of the Book of Jonah and in the compassion which He is portrayed as having for the heathen city of Nineveh? Of the work and suc-

[5] II K. 10: 30.

cess of these prophets, the following paragraphs tell clearly:

The Supreme Miracle.

"The supreme miracle of Israel's history is that out of this period of overwhelming doubt there arose certain men like Amos and Hosea, whose faith was strengthened rather than daunted by the problems of the hour, and who beheld with clear vision, not a God weak or capricious who ruled as merely the champion of little Israel, but one supreme God of justice and love, who absolutely and justly controlled the forces of nature as well as the affairs of men. They recognized that the impending advance of Assyria was not because Jehovah was powerless or regardless of the fortunes of his people; it was rather because of Israel's deep-seated guilt. They appreciated the necessity for some great revolutionizing experience which would turn the people from their apostasy and crimes to the recognition of the character and demands of the one true God who had ever guided them from the first and had in store for them a destiny, if they were but prepared for it, far more glorious than popular poet had ever pictured. Assyria, therefore, was, in their eyes, Jehovah's agent, not of mere judgment, but of that discipline which was necessary before Israel would be prepared for the noble destiny which awaited it.

"In the stress of their own personal and national experiences, Amos and Hosea likewise saw clearly the insufficiency of the popular religion and ceremonial formalism of their day. The God of justice and love whom they beheld could not be worshipped or pleased by mere forms and sacrifices. Hence they proclaimed the immortal truth, which humanity has been so slow to accept, that justice and mercy and love toward God and man are the only gifts which will win the divine favor.

"The Northern Israelites as a whole failed utterly to respond to the plain, convincing appeals of their noblest prophets. Hence the nation lost its life, as Amos and Hosea had predicted. A few thoughtful souls doubtless paid heed, and in their own spiritual experience realized, in the face of public and private disaster, the truth of the words which the prophets had proclaimed. Northern Israel lost its life, but Judah became the heir of its rich spiritual heritage, and preserved and transmitted it, so that to-day that exalted ethical spiritual monotheism, first revealed to a few earnest men and by them flashed before the bewildered vision of the corrupt rulers and leaders of Northern Israel, has become the possession and inspiration of all mankind." Failure in the North.

The Southern Kingdom. During the two centuries of the Period of the Divided Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom maintained unbroken the Davidic line of kings. For the most part, these also were unworthy characters; almost all of them idolators. Was it any wonder that the Plan of God could unfold but slowly, under such circumstances? Three of the kings of Judah did institute reforms, Asa, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah; and prophets were raised up to call the nation back to God, Joel, Isaiah and Micah, possibly also Obadiah. Again and again did Isaiah, "the king of prophets," call the king of Judah back from political entanglements which spelled disloyalty to God and national ruin. Thus was the nation saved from greater moral decay on the one hand and from immediate political ruin on the other. In the South.

Prophets.

Meanwhile, the very darkness of the political and religious outlook was being used of God to turn the thoughts of the spiritually-minded toward the more distant Hope. Isaiah and Micah prophesied both in this period, and in the next, when their prophecies will be referred to. Joel, however, is thought by many to belong to this period.[6] His prophecy contains a call to repentance and a gracious promise. In the former, he lifts the vision of an impending crisis, "the day of the Lord." In the latter he refers so luminously to that which had at least a beginning of fulfilment on the Day of Pentecost: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."[7]

VIII. *Period of the Single Kingdom*

With the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C., the Northern Kingdom came to an end. This date, however, was of little significance to the Southern Kingdom as its life was preserved until the Exile in 586 B. C. The ministries of Isaiah and Micah extended into this period, and there appeared also, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

Two characteristics of this period are noteworthy. One was the increasing corruption,

[6] Others refer Joel 3: 1-2 to the exile of Judah instead of Israel and assign the prophet to a post-exilic period.

[7] Joel 2: 28; Cf. Acts 2: 17.

which was manifesting itself. The other was the increasingly spiritual vision of prophecy.

Corruption Increases.

Corruption was increasing. But one king can be reckoned good, Josiah. Announcements of impending divine judgments are received with scorn and defiance.[8] The prophets are imprisoned for speaking in the name of Jehovah.[9] False prophets catch the public ear.[10] The nation claims immunity from danger, and political security, because of its covenant relations with God,[11] at a time when its life is in open defiance of the laws of God. Could God reveal to an age so corrupt His glorious plans of redemption? As though to challenge these evils, through the messengers of God more daring declarations than ever were made. God seemed to use the darkest hour of Israel's history to bring out the most brilliant stars of hope.

Pictures of God's Plan.

The fulfilment of God's Plan is variously portrayed. It is a Kingdom.[12] It is a world with the house of Jehovah as its center of interest.[13] It is an exalted Zion.[14] Its blessedness baffles description. It brings joy.[15] It brings peace and justice, forgiveness and health.[16] Death is taken away.[17] God is the great Defender.[18]

[8] Jer. 36: 23, 24.
[9] 2 Chron. 36: 16; Jer. 26: 20-23.
[10] Jer. 28.
[11] Jer. 7: 4.
[12] Micah 4: 8.
[13] Isa. 2: 2-4.
[14] Zech. 8: 1-7.
[15] Isa. 9: 3.
[16] Isa. 33: 17-24.
[17] Isa. 25: 8.
[18] Zech. 12: 8, 9.

Holiness.

In contrast with existing conditions of evil, there will be conditions of holiness, and all will "be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of justice and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. 4: 3, 4). The people of that Golden Age will serve Jehovah.[19] His law will be written on their hearts.[20] There will be cleansing from all sin.[21]

A World Vision.

The scope of these blessed purposes is world-wide. "Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day" (Isa. 19: 21). "The veil that is spread over *all the nations*" shall be taken away. All languages shall be cleansed from their pollution.[22]

Just because of the greatness of the work and the magnitude of the divine plan, it will require supernatural power to carry it through. "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 37: 32). The human agency through which this divine working will manifest itself is Israel. Not all Israel, but the true Israel, even though this element be so small as to be called nothing but a Remnant.[23] Then again, elsewhere, the agency

[19] Jer. 30: 9.
[20] Jer. 31: 31-34.
[21] Zech. 13: 1, 2.
[22] Isa. 25: 7; Cf. 2 Cor. 3: 16; Zeph. 3: 9.
[23] Isa. 37: 32; 10: 20, 21.

becomes an agent, an Anointed One, a Branch,[24] the Servant of Jehovah,[25] the King.[26]

The time for the fulfilment of the farther and the nearer purposes of God is described as "that day," [27] "at the end of the days," [28] "the day of Jehovah." [29]

City and Temple Destroyed.

IX. *Period of Exile*

In 586 B. C., the city of Jerusalem, with the Temple of Solomon, was destroyed and, shortly afterward, the best blood of the nation was taken off to Babylonia in captivity. The effect of this political disaster was to overwhelm forever the claims of those who had attached a magical virtue to the Temple and who had regarded the chosen nation as secure from punishment, no matter what its sins might be. It shattered that confidence in a ceremonial religion which the materially-minded element in the nation had entertained. Jehovah was revealed to be a God Who set a supreme value upon moral quality. He would rather have His Temple destroyed, than permit His moral law to be broken with impunity. He preferred reality in religion to a formal worship. His choice of Israel was for moral ends and great unselfish purposes. If Israel as a na-

[24] Isa. 11: 1-5; Jer. 23: 5.
[25] Isa. 42: 1-4; 52: 13-53: 12.
[26] Zech. 9: 9-10; Isa. 9: 6; 33: 17.
[27] Micah. 4: 6. [28] Isa. 2: 2. [29] Zeph. 1: 7.

tion would not serve these ends and purposes, He would reject the nation and crush their national life, if so He might draw out of the mass a remnant that would realize His will.

Two Things Needed.

Two things needed now to be done to carry forward the purposes of God in His dealings with the exiled race. There was need for some influence to be exerted upon their oppressors to mitigate the rigors of their captivity. This need was met in Daniel. There was need for some one to inspire the courage and guide the spiritual hopes of the exiles themselves. This need was met in Ezekiel. Wrapped in symbolism which forbids dogmatic interpretation, both prophets foretell the deliverances of the remnant and the consummation of the Kingdom purposes of God.

X. *Period of Restoration*

The Return.

In 538 B. C., permission is given to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild their temple. About 43,000 of them did so. These would naturally be the more patriotic and the more pious of the exiles. Almost insuperable difficulties faced them as they sought to restore their city and rebuild the Temple. For this hour of gloom and of fear, prophets were raised up—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi—who warned the people against the false ceremonial religion of former days and against a false confidence in formal

covenant relations, and who brought to the people prophecies of a supernatural co-operation which would make the mountain to become a plain: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."

Retrospect

Looking Back.

Thus we come to the close of the Old Testament record by surveys which have been indeed most hurried and most superficial, but which may have this advantage, that they set forth with clearness the double work of God: by His providences guiding and moulding the life of His people; and by His revelations unfolding to them the spiritual truth which was for their immediate salvation and for the subsequent service of the whole race.

In a former chapter, Israel's development was followed until the time when Israel became a kingdom. In this chapter God's great Plan is seen portrayed in bolder and more sweeping outline, as the providence of God widened the horizon of the nation. Had the human channel of divine revelation, Israel, remained but a family or a tribe, it would not have been able to grasp nor express God's great thought for human redemption. But in the life of the chosen race appeared great traits of evil. Israel was neither true to the leadings of Jehovah's providences, nor true

to the teachings of Jehovah's revelation. Through such an agency the divine Plan could not be unfolded. Decades and centuries of discipline and pleading intervened in which judgment and mercy mingled, so that a worthy people, be they ever so few, might be developed to grasp God's thought and do God's will.

Leading Up.

The process cannot be followed in all its details. All the events of Israel's life are not recorded for us. The full significance of the events which are recorded is not always explained. Enough is at hand to show that in the end, God's great Preparatory Stage reached a successful conclusion. Divine truth, moral teachings, religious conceptions, a knowledge of God, a realization of sin—these all were transmitted to man, and had become the possession of man unto salvation for those who believed and obeyed. Furthermore a race had been developed within whose life the conditions were fulfilled which God wanted for the next great step in the unfolding of His Plan,—*the Incarnation.*

A Threefold Need.

The Old Testament dispensation had unfolded man's need along three distinct lines; and God's Plan even in its preparatory stage, had made a partial provision for these three needs, while at the same time it promised that the perfect and permanent provision would come in God's good time. (1) The first need unfolded was that for a

PERIOD OF PREPARATION		PERIOD OF REALIZATION	
THE NEED	**THE RECORD**		**THE SUPPLY**
A PRIEST for Atonement—Intercession	Genesis to Deut.	The Gospel Narrative	JESUS who is Crucified—Eternal Advocate
A KING for Authority—Leadership	Joshua to Chron.	Acts and Revelation	OUR LORD who is Ascended—Coming Again
A PROPHET for Revelation—Instruction	Books of Prophecy	Gospels and Revelation	SON and HOLY SPIRIT in Incarnation—Pentecost

priest who would mediate between a holy God and a guilty sinner, and a sacrifice which would expiate sin. The Aaronic priesthood and the elaborate sacrificial rites which were instituted, set forth this need and symbolized God's future provision for it. (2) The second need unfolded was that for a king who would be at the head of the kingdom to lead in time of war and rule in time of peace. He was needed to exercise authority, unite the conflicting interests of the many by his sovereign will, and be the honored head of the nation. If an Israelite had been asked to state this need more definitely, he would instantly have described it in terms of what King David meant to the Hebrew nation. (3) The third need unfolded was that for a prophet, one who would reveal fully and perfectly the character and will of God.

The earnest soul, hungering for this knowledge of God and this fellowship with Him, asked whether this threefold need could be met. "Yes," comes the answer:

"It shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee: See the Christ stand!"

CHAPTER IV

Christ's Place in God's Plan

"Christianity is the final religion, because all further progress in our knowledge of God and His ways must be based upon and conditioned by the saving power of Jesus Christ. Whatever else God may do for the race, He will not abolish the supreme significance of our Lord."—*W. Douglas Mackenzie.*

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

"The coming of the Christ is God's plan for each people whose life He maintains on the earth. They wait for Him."—*W. O. Carver.*

IV.

CHRIST'S PLACE IN GOD'S PLAN

"WHEN the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son." The days of Preparation are over, the Period of Realization has begun. The Sacrifice, toward which pointed all earlier sacrifices, is to be provided. The Priest, of which Aaron and his house were but imperfect forerunners, is to be inducted into office. The King, for whom David served for a millennium as type, is to appear. The Prophet, who will perfectly reveal the full-orbed truth concerning which "the prophets sought and searched diligently," is to come forth. We pass from the Old Testament to the New, from Israel to Christ. The divine Plan which began with a single life sweeps back to a single Life.

Not a New Plan.

Is it not a new Plan, some change of purpose on the part of God? No. It is the same Plan. In proof of this, see how Christ's life and work are linked up with God's past dealings with Israel. The first announcement of His coming was made in the Temple.[1] He was born in Bethle-

[1] Luke 1: 8-17.

hem, the home of Israel's shepherd king. He came of Jewish lineage. He was brought up as a Jewish lad. He studied and was master of the Jewish Scriptures. His life is constantly portrayed as a fulfilment of the prophecies of former days.[2] His message was the message of earlier days, only ampler, fuller. So loyal was He to all past unfoldings of God's Plan, that He could say, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5: 17). So much did He feel Himself to be a part of that Plan that He could say to the unspiritual men who criticised Him for breaking with the past, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad" (John 9: 56). It is the same Plan of World Redemption which was given to the race after the Fall, when the words of hope were spoken, "He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3: 15). It is the same Plan of World Redemption which called Abraham out of Haran and said to him, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 3). It is the same Plan of World Redemption which found such wonderful revelation through Isaiah, the king of prophets: The same Plan still, but now *in the Period of its Realization.* The agency is no longer Israel, wilful, reluctant, way-

The Old Promise.

[2] Luke 24: 27.

THE SEA OF GALILEE OR LAKE TIBERIAS

Bird's-eye view, over-looking the city of Tiberias

ward, disobedient. The Agent is Christ, faithful, obedient, willing, blameless. And so, the unfolding of the divine Plan is *perfect.*

How He Came.

Quietly came God's perfect Agent for human redemption, "like the breaking of each new day from the silent cavern of night, like the stir of happy spring from the fruitless winter-tide." A babe was born in a manger at Bethlehem. Of His early life we know but little. He was brought up in a carpenter's home in Nazareth. Nazareth was a town with an evil reputation. It must have had at least its share of sinful and spotted lives. But the Boy Jesus kept His life unspotted and pure. He "did not have what was regarded as a liberal education,—the Pharisees of Jerusalem counted this a reproach[8]—but what educational advantages Nazareth afforded were doubtless placed at His disposal." Following the custom of His people, He learned a trade, the trade of His father. So He became a carpenter. Justin Martyr says He made plows and yokes. Almost the only record of these years of His life is, that He "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2: 52). He arrived at young manhood. He went forth from Nazareth and gathered a group of men about Him and taught them. They followed Him. Just why, they did not know. He

[8] John 7: 15.

His Commanding Way.

had a commanding way. He had a wonderful personality. He unfolded truth in a wondrous manner. Their lives were gripped by what He was, by what He said, and by what He did; and so they continued to follow Him. Every day they seemed to get new points of view about things. They tried to adjust their old ideas about things to the new ideas which they learned from Him, but the new ideas always seemed truer and more real than the old. They asked themselves more than once the question, Who is this man? Other people were asking the same question.[4] Now no one of these disciples had any desire to do more than answer the question in the simplest way possible. They had been brought up to be very careful of that word, divine. Jesus was an unusual man: but that didn't explain it all. Jesus was a prophet: but that didn't explain everything satisfactorily. One day, one of their own number gave an answer, and said to this their Leader,

He Is God.

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God." This description of His Person was endorsed by the Master Himself. The more the disciples thought of it, the more it seemed that this description and this one alone would meet all the facts in the case. And the most wonderful thing about it was, that this position did not seem to upset or do violence to their belief in One God.

[4] John 7: 12, 40, 41.

The world now speaks of this great truth as the Incarnation, God appearing in human flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Incarnation

The Incarnation revealed God; it completed and perfected the work which the prophets had attempted to do. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son" (Heb. 1: 1, 2). Jesus Christ revealed the character and will of God, the Father, in three ways: by what He was, by what He said, and by what He did; that is, by His life, by His words, and by His works; that is, as a Person, as a Teacher, and as a Worker. There were two directions, especially, in which Jesus Christ made a perfect revelation of God the Father.

The Unveiling of Holiness.

(1) *He revealed the holiness of God.* God had sent prophet after prophet to declare to men the holiness of God. But no one had yet lived out, in actual life, that holiness. Man after man —prophet, priest, king—had lived and died, but they had all lived and died with the stain of sin upon their lives, until men came to believe that sin was a necessary evil, and so they began to excuse the sin of their own lives. Then it was that God, "sending His own Son in the likeness

of sinful flesh . . . . . condemned sin in the flesh." Christ came. He lived as a boy in Nazareth. It was not a town with any good reputation. Christ was no wealthy lad, whose wealth would cut Him off from other lives around Him. He was a carpenter lad, and as such would come into touch with the general crowd of village boys. Yet He kept His life clean. It can be done. He did it. He grew to be a man. His work took Him among the lowest and most degraded, yet the evil of their lives did not enter His soul. He called twelve disciples to be His followers. Of these, one was a miser; another had a tendency to evil language. Yet Christ's life was not tainted. So pure was His heart that He could teach men by example, as well as by word of mouth, saying, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[5] So pure were His thoughts that He could carry His preaching beyond the sphere of action and condemn the passionate thoughts of men. So blameless was His life that He could challenge His enemies saying, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"[6] His enemies, scanning His life with the keen eyes of hatred, could not fasten upon any sin. What John said was true: "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."[7] What Paul said was true: He was "the image of the

[5] Matt. 5: 8. [6] John 8: 46. [7] John 1: 4.

invisible God."[8] What He Himself said was true: "He that beholdeth Me beholdeth Him that sent Me."[9]

The Unveiling of Love.

(2) *Christ also revealed the love of God.* He loved the unloving. It is an easy thing to merely respond to love, but to go forth with love for those whose hearts were yet unloving, was Christ's way. Men did not seek Him. He sought them, and finding them loved them, and His love smote "the chords of self, that, trembling into music, pass from sight." Long afterward, the Apostle John wrote of what Christ had taught him about God at this point, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."[10]

Christ loved the unlovely as well as the unloving. It is said that Science teaches "the survival of the fittest," but that Jesus teaches "the salvation of the unfittest." If He had chosen for His followers, the cultured, the talented, the generous, the educated, His love might have been easily understood. But He called fishermen, Galileans, men of little education. He brought one most unlovely character into the inner circle of His love, to give him, so far as we can judge, a chance, the best possible chance. His deeds of mercy lead Him, not to palaces but to the poor. The loathsome leper, whom others would not even approach, He touched.[11]

[8] Col. 1: 15.
[9] John 12: 45.
[10] I John 4: 9.
[11] Matt. 8: 3.

Christ loved sinners. There is nothing which so cuts men off from others as moral defilement. And just because of this, the Jews of Christ's time were only able to emphasize the holiness of God at the expense of His love. Christ revealed a God of Holiness, Who is also a God of Love. He, the blameless One, was a friend of publicans and sinners. And the love His life revealed has come down the centuries to answer the doubts and fears of sin-burdened hearts:

"So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.
It is the voice of Jesus that I hear;
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near."

If more can be said, it would be to point out that Christ even loved those who were aliens or enemies. He had taught, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you."[12] But Christ lived the truth He had taught. He healed one of those who came to arrest Him.[13] He forgave those who slew Him.[14]

The Perfect Prophet.

Thus was it that Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, performed perfectly the office of prophet, and gave to man the full and final revelation of the Godhead. This part of God's great Plan for World Redemption was realized.

[12] Matt. 5: 44. [13] Luke 22: 50, 51. [14] Luke 23: 34.

The Crucifixion

The Perfect Priest.

Jesus Christ understood perfectly that the work which He had to do, went further than what He did as prophet in revealing the character and will of God. As prophet He had chiefly to do with ignorance. There was guilt also to be dealt with. This task fell to the priest, offering up sacrifice. God's Plan for World Redemption called for a blameless priest and for a perfect sacrifice. Christ was both in one. He offered Himself up, even unto death.

His death was not accidental. It was necessary. He recognized the necessity for it in the Plan, and walked toward it deliberately. Even references to this part of His mission caused the multitudes that followed Him to fall away.[15] His explicit announcement of His impending death led one of His own disciples to make objections.[16] But Christ went straight on in the way to Calvary. He knew, as we know now, that it was a necessary part of the Plan. He knew, as we do not, just how necessary it was. He measured the full meaning of Sin, as He overcame it by His death. We can only stand by and wonder at it all,—what an awful thing Sin must be when it makes the Son of God suffer so! No, we can do more than wonder at it all; we can

[15] John 6: 60-66. [16] Mark 8: 31-33.

receive the blessings which stream from this Sacrifice for sin: pardon, peace, a new sense of the heinousness of sin, a new impulse of love for Him Who so loved us. Yes, and we can do more than receive; we can impart the good news and its power to others.

What needed to be done then, was done by Christ. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan sets forth the significance of Christ's priestly work by referring to the Old Testament ritual which foreshadowed it:

Symbolism of the Sanctuary.

"(1) The outer court was the place of service and sacrifice. The greater part of Mark's Gospel has to do with that outer court. There He perfected service in the dedication of His life; and consummated sacrifice in the mystery of His consent to death in Gethsemane. The actually atoning death was accomplished, without the camp, where He went, bearing 'our sins in His own body on the tree.'

"(2) The holy place contained the table of shewbread, the seven-branched lamp, and the altar of incense. The dedication of the outer court being completed by the final sin offering beyond the court in the place of excommunication, the Priest turned back, and by the way of resurrection He entered the holy place; and for a little I see Him, the risen but not ascended Lord, tarrying among His people: in the place of the candlestick, of light and testimony; of the table of shewbread, of communion and fellowship; of the holy altar of incense, of prevailing intercession.

"(3) Then the High Priest by ascension entered the holy of holies, 'there to appear in the presence of God

for us;' and the final note is that of His co-operation with His own, when it is said that they went everywhere preaching and working, 'the Lord working with them.' As He passed in through the rent veil, He left the way open, and all those of us who share His life have access where He is, and that is the true place of our worship.

"At last the true Priest is found, and there is need for no other; but there is no other way of approach to God save through His mediation."

The King and the Kingdom

The Perfect King.

On the very day of His fulfilment of the supreme act of His priestly commission, Christ referred in unmistakable terms to another office which He held: "And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering saith unto him, Thou sayest" (Mark 15: 2). And so, a little later, Pilate placed over His cross the inscription "The King of the Jews." The question that was asked at His birth was, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Between Christ's birth and His death is to be found a succession of utterances in which Christ's claims to Kingship are asserted. It is a great study and one which calls for an altogether separate treatment, to examine into Christ's teachings on this subject. Only a few outstanding features of Christ's teachings on this point can be referred to.

There is no doubt about *the reality* of the

A Real Kingdom.

Kingdom to which Christ refers. This was no mere figure of speech. As truly as He was making atonement for sin, just so truly was He founding a Kingdom. It was not a material kingdom,[17] but it was a real Kingdom for all that. It might have no resemblance to what ordinarily went by that word,[18] but in spite of that it was a real thing. Those who were brought into that Kingdom might be slow in realizing what it was, but that did not destroy the reality of it, any more than a new-born babe's inability to grasp the fact of the material world into which it had been born, would alter the reality of that world.

The Kingdom has been thought by some to be portrayed as only in the future;[19] by others, as wholly in the present.[20] A better view may be that it is *both*[21] *present and future.* Its present existence does not possess all those characteristics of glory which its future realization will possess. None the less is the Kingdom a present reality.

The Kingdom is *a spiritual Kingdom.*[22] It is associated with certain spiritual changes[23] which its members have experienced, and certain spir-

[17] John 18: 36.
[18] Matt. 5: 3-10.
[19] Matt. 16: 27, 28.
[20] Matt. 13: 24, 31, 33.
[21] Matt. 13: 37-43.
[22] Luke 17: 21.
[23] John 3: 5.

itual relations which they sustain toward God[24] and toward each other[25] and toward the world.[26]

The Kingdom is vitally, inseparably *connected with the Person of Christ,*[27] who is King of the Kingdom. There is no Kingdom apart from the King. He does not come to be enthroned over a kingdom. He comes to found the Kingdom, to create it, by bringing men into relations with Himself.

The glory of the Kingdom is to be *revealed at some future day,* when the King returns in glory.[28] Meanwhile, it has its stages[29] of progress and of extension, but the full realization of it belongs to the future period which we have called God's Great Next in the unfolding of the divine Plan.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Gift of Power.

One more provision for world redemption was made during this Period of Realization. Not only did Christ bring the perfect revelation of God; not only did He make the perfect sacrifice for sin; not only did He lay the foundations of the ideal Kingdom; but the Holy Spirit was also given. Here the unfolding of the divine Plan outreached, in the most conspicuous way of all,

[24] Matt. 7: 21.
[25] Matt. 20: 25-28.
[26] John 17: 14, 15.
[27] John 5: 21, 22; 14: 6.
[28] Matt. 24: 30, 31.
[29] Matt. 24: 6.

all the anticipations of man. There had been clear and definite prophecies concerning the gift of the Spirit in the Old Testament,[30] but, after all, expectation was focussed upon the coming Messiah. This was a correct unfolding of God's Plan, for the Messiah was to come first, and only His coming and sacrifice made it possible for the Holy Spirit to be given.[31] In this sense the Holy Spirit was the Gift of Christ,[32] and, furthermore, after He was given at Pentecost never to be withdrawn, He is still represented as being given to the individual on the basis of his relation to the sacrificial work of Christ.[33] The gift of the Holy Spirit is then a part of the believer's inheritance in Christ. If he is saved at all, if Christ has made any provision of pardon for him, He has equally made provision of the gift of the Holy Spirit for him. There is nothing to do but to claim by faith the gift of the indwelling and infilling Spirit,[34] just as forgiveness is appropriated by faith.

Given to Abide.

Christ's Agent.

But why the gift of the Holy Spirit in the unfolding of the divine Plan of World Redemption? Was not the work of Jesus Christ Himself sufficient? Did He not lay the basis for world redemption adequately? Yes, but the Holy Spirit was given as the Great Divine Agent for the

[30] Joel 2: 28-29.
[31] John 16: 7.
[32] John 14: 26; 15: 26.
[33] Acts 2: 28.
[34] Gal. 3: 14.

next period, the Period of Application. He is to apply to human life the work which Christ realized.

He Reveals.

So the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to men. The disciples, for example, did not apprehend at all adequately the deity of this Jesus with whom they had been having fellowship, until the Holy Spirit was given. They were slow to apprehend truth,[35] even when the Master sought to teach them in His own patient and simple way. What hope that they would ever learn after He was gone? This hope: "He, the Spirit of truth . . shall guide you into all truth" (John 15: 12-14).

Applies Atonement.

The Holy Spirit also applies to men the atoning work of Jesus Christ. He applies the sacrifice of Christ, in its redeeming power,[36] in its cleansing power,[37] in its gifts of fellowship with God.[38]

Crowns Christ King.

The Holy Spirit also applies to men the Kingship of Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit that the rebellious will and the evil imagination and the lawless appetite, are brought into subjection to Christ the King.[39] So, too, on the positive side of life, it is through the Holy Spirit that Christ leads His followers forth to world conquest, girding them with strength, illumining

[35] John 14: 9, 26.
[36] Rom. 8: 1-4.
[37] Rom. 8: 12-14.
[38] Rom. 8: 15-17.
[39] Rom. 8: 7-9; 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5; Eph. 5: 18.

their minds, baptizing them with courage and even with superhuman power.[40]

Thus it is that, by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ projects His life and work beyond the limits of His brief career upon the earth and fulfils the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Missionary Test

Is it for All the World?

The question now comes up, Is this Gospel which Christ realized, for all the world, or is it not? It is well to answer the question, for there are those who say, "Christianity was never meant to be a world religion. On the contrary, Confucianism is good for the Chinese; Hinduism is suited to the temperament of the people of India; Mohammedanism quite fits the Arab; and paganism is possibly best for the African." Pass by, for the time, the weakness of a position which so completely overlooks the great evils with which non-Christian religions are seamed, that it almost seems like saying that "consumption is good for a consumptive." Let us ask with seriousness the question, Is Christianity meant for all the world? The question may be asked in this chapter because we are dealing with Christ and His work. The question may be asked of Him as it could not be asked of Abra-

[40] I Cor. 2: 4; Matt. 10: 19; Acts 4: 29-31.

ham or David or even Isaiah, however good and clear their answers might be. Their replies would not be final; they were channels of a partial revelation; it might be said that they did not know.[41] But Christ's answer is final. He was the Word of God. Furthermore, this Christian religion derives all its content from Him. He came to earth to *realize,* what a later period was to *apply.* Did Christ lay the foundation for a world religion? If He didn't, there is nothing to build on. The Period of Application can only apply what the Period of Realization has realized.[42]

Yes, Because Spiritual.

The question might be answered by calling attention to *the spiritual character* of the religion of Jesus Christ. The spiritual character of our Christian religion would thus prove it to be a universal religion, for that which is purely spiritual is always capable of world-wide reach. As a thoughtful writer has said: "When religion is thus carried back to its deepest center, to the fellowship of man in his heart with God, the separating limits of national religions fall away as meaningless; the most inward experience of what truly belongs to man can no longer be a privilege of one people above the others—it must become a thing of the whole of mankind." And another writer has built up a strong argument on the su-

[41] Eph. 3: 5.

[42] See pages 30-31.

preme place which *faith* holds in the Christian religion as a condition of salvation. This quality or act, he says, is "so centrally founded in human nature that all men of all races, and all forms and degrees of intelligence and civilization are capable of it." [43]

Yes, Because of Scope.

Another way of answering the question would be by pointing out how frequently in word and experience, *Jesus Christ went beyond the limits of His own race and nation.* He does not say, "I am the Light of the Jews," but "I am the Light of the World" (John 8: 12). "When I am in the world," He adds, "I am the Light of the World" (John 9: 5). His whole life seems to have been lived in a world horizon. His temptations were in that sphere: "The devil taketh Him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world" (Matt. 4: 8). His visions were world visions: "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8: 11). His Gospel was to be a world Gospel: "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world" (Matt. 24: 14). He therefore bade His disciples to live, as He did, in a world horizon. "The field," said He, "is the world" (Matt. 13: 38). He expected

[43] W. D. Mackenzie's "The Final Faith," page 193.

they would experience world-wide persecution in the fulfilment of their commission, and so He said, "Before governors and kings shall ye be brought for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matt. 10: 18). In the background of His prayer life was this world passion: "that the world may believe" (John 17: 21).

More significant than these scattered mentions of a world purpose in His incarnation, are the titles He assumed. How easy and how honorable to have accepted the title "Son of David" or "Messiah," which some were ready to give to Him.[44] But there was danger of narrowness of vision in it. Men might make it refer solely to Jewish religious expectations. So He took the title "Son of Man," which not only relates Him to humanity in general, but lifts Him to a position of lofty power where all race and class distinctions are forever lost.[45]

A Threefold Test

To determine whether Christianity, as founded by Jesus Christ, is a world religion, let us examine three leading conceptions of this Christian faith.

[44] John 1: 41.
[45] Matt. 8: 20; 9: 6; 10: 23; 13: 41.

What Kind of a God?

1. *God.* There is in Christianity a conception of God. What sort of a God does the Christian believe in? The African has a conception of a god; he has a god for the lake and another god for the river, a god for the plain and another god for the mountain, a god for the down-country and another god for the up-country. Is that the Christian's God—only with a little better and vaster knowledge of geography, so that he, too, has a god for the West and a god for the East. "No!" comes the answer. "Our God is a World God." Is that so? Do we realize the price which must be paid for such a faith? Do we believe in a World God: we must give Him to all the world, or we lose this noblest conception of our Christian faith. The Christian conception of God drives the Church to the ends of the earth in a great missionary movement.

What Kind of a Savior?

2. *Christ.* In Christianity there is also the conception of Christ as a Savior. How great a Savior is He? It is estimated that to-day about one-fifth [46] of the human race has accepted the Christian religion. Suppose that the other four-fifths of the human race were to receive Christianity: would Jesus Christ need to come all the weary way from Heaven to Calvary to die again for these others? "No!" comes the answer. "It was an old time preacher who gave us his in-

[46] Some say, one third.

spired testimony that Jesus Christ is 'the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world'." [47] Is that our faith? Then we owe it to Him, if we do not owe it to the world, to carry Him to "the whole world" and give Him a chance to extend His saving power, until He "see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

Real Faith.

3. *The Holy Spirit.* This is a part of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Do we believe in the Holy Spirit? How much do we believe in Him? The faith of a Church in the Holy Spirit is open to question unless that Church be a missionary Church. Let us illustrate our meaning.

Imagine a visitor going through the Baldwin Locomotive Works, the largest locomotive works in our land. The guide stops and, pointing to an immense engine of the most modern construction, he says: "There is the finest piece of machinery for pulling that there is in the world. And I will now prove it to you." Imagine him going aside and getting an express-wagon, one of these little express-wagons that the children play with. He attaches that to the engine and it pulls it. Will the visitor have any adequate conception of the power of that locomotive? Rather let the train of cars be brought—a great train of mas-

[47] I John 2: 2.

sive steel freight cars, loaded with freight. Let the locomotive be attached to that load; let it pull that, and *then* its power will be revealed.

When we relate our petty lives alone to the uplifting influences of the Holy Spirit, we do not know His power. Let us bring the great train of cars,—great national cars, continental cars, freighted with a world's need: America, to be sure, with her 100,000,000 souls, but Africa, too, with her 150,000,000 souls, and India with her 300,000,000, and China with her 440,000,000. Let us relate that burden of sin and need and woe to the uplifting power of the Holy Spirit. And when we see Him lift *that* load in world redemption, we will know how to believe in the Holy Spirit.

A World Religion.

Instead of not being a world religion, the fundamental beliefs of Christianity are such that the essence of our faith is lost when Christianity is reduced to lower terms than those of a world religion.

CHAPTER V

World Evangelization

"All through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death."

—*W. C. Smith.*

"Sometimes men write as if the universalism of a religion, the quality which makes it a missionary religion, were accidental, dependent perhaps upon some words of its founder or some phase of thought among his followers. But such a view of the matter is, at least, inadequate. A religion becomes a missionary religion, it attracts believers of various races, it drives its preachers forth to various climes, because it contains certain doctrines, it deals with certain facts, it aims at certain results in which all men are believed to be deeply concerned."—*W. Douglas Mackenzie.*

"Fear not, we cannot fail;
The vision must prevail;
Truth is the oath of God, and sure and fast,
Through death and hell, holds onward to the last."

V

WORLD EVANGELIZATION

HOW rapid has been the unfolding of the divine Plan for World Redemption in the Period of Realization which we have been considering. That was because God had a perfect instrument through which to work, His Son. And He worked alone. The great events connected with the realization of Redemption follow therefore in natural and regular and rapid succession.

The *Incarnation,* when in the fulness of the time "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law."

Then, the *Crucifixion,* when "in due season, Christ died for the ungodly."

Again, the *Resurrection,* wherein "this Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses," as Peter said on the day of Pentecost.

Then, the *Ascension,* whereby Jesus "was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Finally, *Pentecost,* when "suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind . . . . and there appeared

unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire."

What Next?

How wonderful it all was: the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and Pentecost! And now, *what is next?* Yes, what comes next?

How curious the disciples were to know! And they came and spread before their Lord their crude Jewish hopes, and said, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And our age, too, is curious, though we think we are not quite so crude; and we spread before our Lord our hopes, millennial hopes—pre-millennial hopes and post-millennial hopes, both kinds,—and using a fine phrase of Paul's we say, "Dost Thou at this time 'sum up all things in Christ'?" And our Lord brushes aside these questions as He says, "No, that is not next. Do you wish to know what lies *next* in the unfolding of the Plan for World Redemption? I will tell you: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. EVANGELIZATION *is next.*"

What it Means.

What does this mean? It means that the Great Commission is not merely a command of Christ. It is not merely a great command of Christ. It is not merely the greatest command of Christ. It is *an announcement* by the Son of God *of that which comes next* in the unfolding of the divine Program for World Redemption. It is the ush-

ering in of the third great period,—the Period of Application.

Ideal Fulfilment

A Question of Years.

There are two ways, however, of interpreting the Great Commission of Christ. One is to say, "Yes, we are now in the Period of Application when the Gospel is to be carried to all the world. Some nineteen hundred years of this period have already elapsed. Some day the end of this period will come, and we will then pass on to whatever else there is in the Plan of God." This makes God's Plan rest altogether upon the element of Time, as if the chief need were to wait for a prescribed number of years to elapse, instead of making God's Plan rest rather upon our fulfilment of certain conditions. Such a view is tinged with fatalism. It induces inertia by saying, "God's time has not yet come," instead of saying in true apostolic fashion, "Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation!"

A Question of Conditions.

The other view is one which takes the words of our Lord literally, and declares that it was His Plan that they should hasten to evangelize the whole world of their day. The fact that it was not done would not disprove that it was His Plan, any more than the fact that men do not keep the Moral Law would disprove that the Moral Law is the will and plan of God for man's conduct.

The Plan of God is not to be discovered by looking at human history. The Plan is to be discovered in the Book. No matter how daring, how ideal this view may seem at first sight, are there not reasons for believing that it was Christ's Plan?

He Meant It.

First, was this not the evident meaning of Christ's command? Did He not say, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation," and again, "Ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Human language is not so clumsy and rigid that it should not be capable of conveying adequately human thought. Our Lord was surely master of the language of His day. When He says, "Go," shall we interpret His meaning "Stay"? Does "Ye" mean, "Not you, but your descendants of the next two millenniums?" Does "All the world" means "One-fifth of the world"? Does "Preach the Gospel" mean "Enjoy the Gospel"? If Christ meant to qualify His statements, could He not have done so? If He did not mean what He said, why should He not have said what He did mean?

They so Understood It.

Further, was it not the actual understanding of the disciples that their Lord's command laid upon them this obligation? We do not say that this obligation was universally discharged. It was not.

But it was an obligation recognized by the leaders of the Church and discharged by the majority of the Church's members. In the missionary activity of the early Church, we have one of the strongest arguments for missions to be found anywhere. One of the greatest authorities on the history of the early Church says, "It was not merely the confessors and martyrs who were missionaries. It was characteristic of this religion that every one who seriously confessed the faith, proved of service to its propaganda." And of the rapid spread of Christianity, he gives this summary, "*Seventy years after* the foundation of the very first Gentile Christian Church in Syrian Antioch, Pliny wrote in the strongest terms about the spread of Christianity throughout remote Bithynia, a spread which in his view already threatened the stability of other cults throughout the province. *Seventy years later* still, the paschal controversy reveals the existence of a Christian federation of churches, stretching from Lyons to Edessa, with its headquarters situated at Rome. *Seventy years later,* again, the emperor Decius declared he would sooner have a rival emperor in Rome than a Christian bishop. And ere *another seventy years* had passed, the cross was sewed upon the Roman colors." This spread of Christianity was not accidental. If miraculous, yet was it based on human agency. The

missionary zeal which brought it about, had its anchorage in the understanding which the early disciples had of their Lord's command.

It Needed to be Done.

Again, was not such speedy evangelisation logically—theologically, if you please—required, to make effective Christ's work of atonement wrought out upon Calvary? The atonement of Christ does not work automatically. To become effective in individual salvation, it must be believed; therefore must it be heard; therefore must it be preached. Immediate and complete world evangelization was necessary, unless the greater portion of the human race were to be deliberately excluded from redemption. If Christ's heart yearned for the salvation of the world of His own day, His command must have been intended to urge upon His disciples the announcement of His Gospel to that world. What was logically necessary must have been also commanded.

Is it Impossible?

Once more, is Christ's Plan according to this view so impossible? In his book, "The Key to the Missionary Problem," Andrew Murray speaks of a mathematical diagram that was worked out based on the supposition that there were in the world to-day just one Christian, just one: that this Christian was a true Christian, that is, a missionary Christian; that he lived and worked a whole year dominated by a missionary passion:

that at the end of a whole year this man succeeded in bringing to Christ one other soul. At the end of the first year there would be two Christians. Then imagine each man going out the second year dominated by that missionary purpose, and each man bringing another to Christ. At the end of the second year there would be four. Now, keeping up this law of reasonable progress, how long do you imagine it would be before the world would be brought to Christ?

At the end of 1 year	2
At the end of 2 years	4
At the end of 3 years	8
At the end of 4 years	16
At the end of 5 years	32
At the end of 6 years	64
At the end of 7 years	128
At the end of 8 years	256
At the end of 9 years	512
At the end of 10 years	1,024
At the end of 11 years	2,048
At the end of 12 years	4,096
At the end of 13 years	8,192
At the end of 14 years	16,384
At the end of 15 years	32,768
At the end of 16 years	65,536
At the end of 17 years	131,072
At the end of 18 years	262,144
At the end of 19 years	524,288
At the end of 20 years	1,048,576
At the end of 21 years	2,097,152

At the end of 22 years	4,194,304
At the end of 23 years	8,388,608
At the end of 24 years	16,777,216
At the end of 25 years	33,554,432
At the end of 26 years	67,108,864
At the end of 27 years	134,217,728
At the end of 28 years	268,635,456
At the end of 29 years	537,270,912
At the end of 30 years	1,074,541,824
At the end of 31 years	2,149,083,648

Between thirty and thirty-one years, even in our day when the earth's population is supposed to be so much larger than in the days of Christ! What seems so possible, on the basis of ordinary faithfulness, may we not believe that Christ commanded?

They Nearly Did It.

Still again, did not the disciples of the first three centuries come near to doing this very thing? They almost fulfilled their Lord's command to disciple all nations. We are quite familiar with the spread of Christianity northward and westward chiefly through the missionary labors of Paul. The Epistles and the Book of Acts acquaint us with that movement. But we are prone to forget that this was only one of the several missionary movements characterizing that first century. While Paul was laboring at Antioch, the Christian religion was establishing itself at Alexandria. It spread up the Nile, to the First Cataract, past the First Cataract into Nubia of to-

day, past the Second Cataract into what is now the Egyptian Sudan. It spread over into Abyssinia and established a Christian kingdom there. The full results of the extension of Christianity into these parts are not matters of historical record until a later century, when they burst into view fully matured, but their beginnings belong clearly to the very earliest times.

Into Africa.

Nor was this all, for another movement followed the northern coast of Africa westward and carried the Gospel to the "pillars of Hercules," possessing the northern seaboard of Africa in the name of Christ.

Into India.

Still other movements went eastward through Persia, and at least as far as India. In his recent work, "A History of Missions in India," Richter has marshaled abundant proof of the early entrance of Christianity into India. If then, the Christians of the first centuries came so near to fulfilling literally the command of their Lord in the evangelization of the world, may we not well believe that what they accomplished, their Lord commanded, *and more?*

It was His Plan.

But let these arguments suffice. If this was the thought of Christ, as it was also His command to His disciples, that thus, speedily, the world should be evangelized, what profound suggestions arise from the question, "What if the early Church had fully and perfectly fulfilled her Lord's

will?" Does there not come a thrill of sublime imagining of what it would have meant to this world, to these millenniums of human history, to us, if a wholly obedient Church had allowed God to pass quickly and at once to His Great Next in the further unfolding of the divine program of world redemption.

A Parable.

This then was the Master's ideal Plan. There is a beautiful picture portrayed by Mr. S. D. Gordon, in one of his "Quiet Talks," which sets forth clearly the thought of Jesus Christ for His disciples and Church, and the Plan by which He expected the salvation which He Himself brought, to be extended and applied to human life everywhere.

"The Master is walking with Gabriel, talking intently, earnestly. Gabriel is saying: 'Master, you died for the whole world down there, did you not?' 'Yes.' 'You must have suffered much,' with an earnest look into that great face. 'Yes,' again comes the answer in a wondrous voice, very quiet but strangely full of deepest feeling. 'And do they all know about it?' 'Oh, no; only a few in Palestine know about it so far.' 'Well, Master, what is your Plan? What have you done about telling the world that you have died for them? What is your Plan?'

" 'Well,' the Master is supposed to answer, 'I asked Peter and James and John, and little Scotch

Andrew, and some more of them down there, just to make it the business of their lives to tell others, and the others others, and yet others, and still others, until the last man in the farthest circle has heard the story, and has felt the thrilling and the thralling power of it.'

"And Gabriel knows us folks down here pretty well. He has had more than one contact with the earth. He knows the kind of stuff that is in us. And he is supposed to answer, with a sort of hesitating reluctance, as though he could see difficulties in the working of the Plan, 'Yes—but—suppose Peter fails. Suppose after a while John simply does not tell others. Suppose their descendants, their successors away off in the first edge of the twentieth century, get so busy about things—some of them proper—that they do not tell others, what then?' And his eyes are big with the intenseness of his thought, for he is thinking of the suffering, and he is thinking, too, of the difference to the man who hasn't been told, —'What then?'

"And back comes that quiet, wondrous voice of Jesus, 'Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans,—*I'm counting on them*'."

The New Testament Church

The New Testament gives us some extended record of the life of the early Church during

three decades, from Pentecost to the last imprisonment of Paul. How faithfully did the Church fulfil the will of her Lord?

A Beautiful Picture.

It is a beautiful picture of a beautiful life which we find in the early pages of the Book of Acts. The story should be read in its entirety just as Luke, the beloved physician, has sketched it. Only a few distinctive characteristics of that life can be referred to here.

Days of the Miraculous.

It was a company of people who lived *in an atmosphere of supernaturalism.* They expected the extraordinary to happen and they experienced the extraordinary. There was an other-worldliness about their life that made the spiritual world very real. They were not lacking in real human nature, but for all that, just beyond a thin veil which enveloped human life here on earth, there was a spirit world, there were spiritual forces, there was a Living Lord. And out of that unseen world, gracious influences and experiences were all the time streaming, enriching their human life upon the earth. As we read the story of those days, as we see in what a matter-of-fact way they spoke to their Risen Lord in prayer and praise, as we listen to words unfolding the deepest spiritual truth and dealing with the profoundest spiritual realities, spoken too by men who were neither poets nor philosophers nor theologians, we are compelled to realize that the very

VIEW OF JERUSALEM

Over-looking the Temple area, now occupied by Moslem mosque

atmosphere of life was to them surcharged with the supernatural.

Life also was *full of joy*. They were so glad.[1] We do not need to ask why. It was the gladness of forgiveness, the joy of newness of life, the sense of the sufficiency of the Savior. They were all apostles of glad news, good tidings. And their gladness was not only over the past; it reached into the future and became a great expectancy.[2] Great Gladness.

Life also was *marked by love*. They had fellowship with each other.[3] They broke bread together,[4] and after these love feasts they sometimes united in observing the Lord's Supper to express their love for Him. Their love led some of them to volunteer to give their wealth for the good of all, but this was not a law; it was only a privilege in which those could indulge who desired. Wonderful Love.

Their lives were also *given up to much prayer*. They went generally to the daily prayers in the Temple. It would be a natural place to gather because their Lord had so often taught there,[5] and it would be more spacious for a company which quickly numbered several thousand. It is not to be thought that they gave up their daily tasks or livelihood, but yet they found much time for prayer, and fellowship, and instruction, and wor- Much Prayer.

[1] Acts 2: 46.
[2] Acts 3: 19-21.
[3] Acts 2: 42.
[4] Acts 2: 42, 46.
[5] John 10: 23.

ship, and—one more thing which needs also to be recognized.

Constantly Witnessing.

They were *constantly witnessing for their faith.* This was not so much formal preaching, as talking about their faith and their Lord. It was this that got them into trouble.[6] But it was this witnessing also, which the Holy Spirit used mightily, and we read of vast numbers being added to them of those who believed.[7] "It is safe to say, from various expressions used in Acts (5: 14; 6: 7), that in the three or four years following Pentecost the number converted on that day was trebled. Perhaps even a larger estimate may be allowed. Nor need we suppose that believers were confined to Jerusalem. The movement naturally spread into Judea and Galilee, and it is probable that it penetrated farther. A little later we hear of disciples in Damascus (Acts 9: 2, 10) and other foreign cities (26: 11), and this diffusion of the faith must have begun early. It would appear that at least the Jews of Syria were affected, and it is not impossible that the new Gospel was carried still more widely throughout 'the dispersion' by visitors to the feasts and by other Jewish travelers."[8]

The Gospel of a Person

Most significant is the Gospel, which the early

[6] Acts 4: 1, 2, 17-21.
[7] Acts 2: 47; 4: 4, 33; 5: 14; 6: 7.
[8] G. T. Purves's "The Apostolic Age," page 47.

disciples are portrayed as proclaiming. It is not stated formally, but it keeps finding expression at every turn. Their Gospel was a Gospel of a Person, and that person was Christ.

Before Christ's Ascension, the disciples had traveled a long distance in their faith in Christ. Perhaps the road which their thoughts took in arriving at their faith in Christ, would be somewhat as follows:

How Faith Grew.

"Is He a good man or is He a bad man? Some speak well of Him, some speak otherwise." "He is a good man."[9] "He also possesses unusual gifts: of character, of miracle-working power,[10] of spiritual knowledge."[11] "Clearly God is with Him."[12] "Perhaps He bears some unusual divine commission. Could He be a prophet?"[13] "Perhaps He is the prophesied Elijah."[14] "Can He be the Messiah?"[15] "But He died." "Yes, but He rose again." "He is the Messiah."[16]

He is Alive.

And now since Christ's Ascension two new conceptions dominated their life and thought. (1) *Jesus is still alive.* So the writer of the Acts refers to his Gospel as describing that which "Jesus *began* both to do and teach," clearly implying that in the Acts he is going to set forth that which this Living Lord *continued* to do through the Holy

[9] John 7: 12.
[10] John 7: 31.
[11] John 3: 45, 46.
[12] John 9: 33.
[13] John 7: 40.
[14] Luke 9: 19.
[15] John 7: 26.
[16] Luke 9: 20.

Spirit and by the lives of His disciples.[17] The great proof that Jesus was still alive up yonder beyond the veil which cut heaven off from human vision, was the fact that out of that unseen world had come, according to His promise, this gift of the Holy Spirit.[18] Furthermore, miracles still continued to be wrought in His name.[19] If He is alive, then He is to be consulted in all matters for guidance.[20] His presence may yet be manifested occasionally.[21] Being alive, He will yet come again.[22]

God's Representative.

(2) *Jesus has been made God's representative in all things.*[23] Therefore He is the theme of all preaching.[24] Everything depends on accepting Him and being accepted by Him.[25] God has transferred to Him all authority.[26] Faith is now to be exercised toward Him.[27] All approach to God the Father is to be made through Him, for God the Father has appointed this Jesus as the only way of approach;[28] this is done, not to shut men off, but to make the approach more perfect and more possible. And all that man needs, can be found in Him: leadership, power, guidance, forgiveness. And He is to be the Judge and the

[17] Acts 1: 1.
[18] Acts 2: 33.
[19] Acts 3: 6, 16; 4: 10; 9: 34.
[20] Acts 1: 24.
[21] Acts 7: 56; 9: 5.
[22] Acts 1: 11.
[23] Acts 2: 36.
[24] Acts 2: 22; 3: 13; 4: 10; 5: 20, 31, 40, 42.
[25] Acts 2: 38.
[26] Acts 2: 36.
[27] Acts 3: 16.
[28] Acts 4: 12.

Restorer in days to come.[29] Since He is all of this, He can be none other than God also. He is the Son of God.[30] Following such conceptions as these, the Jewish convert to the Christian faith found that all His former thought of Jehovah and his longed-for relations with God, were transferred to Christ, with this further difference, that what had been an unrealized hope or an imperfectly realized relationship before, now found perfect realization in and through Jesus Christ.

Days of Persecution

Early Persecution.

It was not long before the infant Church was called upon to endure persecution. This persecution first came from the Sadducees. This was the party that was in chief control of the Temple administration. It was not altogether to their liking that a new leadership should develop, such as that exercised by the apostles, with so great an influence over the people:[31] here was the motive of envy. Neither was the doctrine of the resurrection at all to their liking,[32] for they were deniers of all resurrection: here was the motive of intellectual pride. Neither did they enjoy being constantly reminded of their responsibility in the death of Christ:[33] here were the movings of a

[29] Acts 3: 20, 21; 6: 14; 10: 42.
[30] Acts 9: 20.
[31] Acts 4: 2.
[32] Acts 4: 2.
[33] Acts 5: 28.

guilty conscience. Nor, finally, did they approve of this spiritual Gospel which belittled Temple and Law, and foretold the destruction of the Temple. To the Sadducees were soon added other critics and opposers of the Christian faith. The leaders of the Church were arrested, they were lectured, they were warned, they were imprisoned, they were beaten,[34] and withal they only grew bolder in their proclamation of their faith in Jesus Christ. At last matters came to a crisis. Stephen, one of the seven deacons, with a holy boldness and a clear discernment of the implications of the new faith, went even beyond the rest in pressing home the application of the Gospel of Christ. They dragged him to a semi-legal trial. There he renewed his presentation of the new faith. With wonderful skill he sketched the nation's history and unfolded the divine Plan for World Redemption. Then he showed that, again and again, this Plan had been carried forward only by the faithful few, while the chosen race as a whole had been disobedient to its call and opposed to its gracious appointments. Then he charged upon them and their present attitude the sinful spirit of their fathers. "The prisoner, who began in self-defence, ends by hurling at his judges the most audacious charges. At this point a howl of execration from mouths which clashed

A Crisis.

[34] Acts 4: 1-21; 5: 17-40.

with rage drowned the voice of the accuser. Stephen paused; his face changed again; the tumult died. From the instant he heard that cry which told him the end was come, he ceased from rebukes which wrought no penitence but only rage. He fell back from men whom he could not save, upon the Master for Whom he still could speak. The glory of God bathed him with its light. The old radiance stole back again upon his countenance, when, His Face.

> '— looking upward, full of grace
> He prayed, and from a happy place
> God's glory smote him on the face.'

At last he spoke, 'Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.' That hated name let loose the tide of rage which awe had for a moment frozen, and, with illegal tumult, councillors and bystanders, turned through their passion into a mob, swept him from the chamber with a rush and hurried him for execution beyond the northern city gate." [35] "And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of *a young man named Saul.* . . . . And Saul was consenting unto his death." [36]

Thus was accomplished the first martyrdom of this Period of Evangelization. Thus was set First Martyr.

[35] J. O. Dykes's "From Jerusalem to Antioch."
[36] Acts 7: 58-8; 1.

forth the truth, which the Church in some ages has so bravely accepted, in other ages has so craven-heartedly avoided: that as Christ *laid down life for world redemption,* the Church, His body, must *lay down life for world evangelization.* Sin would indeed be a weak force in the world, if it surrendered its kingdom without a mortal conflict.

The Seed of the Church.

Thus also was early witness borne to the conquering power of a witness unto death, which makes "the blood of the martyrs to become the seed of the Church." One in that crowd became a mightier missionary of the Cross than Stephen himself, but the credit belongs to Stephen and to Christ.

Scattered.

Thus also was accomplished a great turning movement in the development of the early Church. Of the missionary spirit of the early disciples there is abundant proof. But had they lacked initiative in not moving away from Jerusalem? Were their horizons of God's will and purposes too circumscribed? Had they grown unmindful, as it is so easy to do, of the rest of the Commission, as they labored to fulfil the first part of it, "Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem"? Be that as it may, their Living Leader Who guides by His Holy Spirit the willing hearts of men, but Who also disposes by His providences of even human unwillingness, He it was, Who

wrought by persecution to make a foreign missionary of the early disciple whose spirit was willing indeed, but whose flesh may have been weak. The record tells us, that "they were all scattered abroad and throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8: 1).

CHAPTER VI

The Missionary Movement

"At last, the Christ! Men's hearts are thrilled!
Lo, now the plan will be fulfilled!
Yet still the years their cycles run,
And still Thy work seems scarce begun.

"Then swiftly in one century's hour
Jehovah bares His arm with power,
Flings wide the gates in ancient lands,
From fettered millions breaks the bands;

"Bids learning, statecraft, science, gold,
Arise and speed His purpose old;
Inspires new heralds, wings their feet,
Arms them with faith all foes to meet.

"Almighty Father, Savior, Friend!
In awe before Thy sway we bend;
Empower our souls to read aright
These tokens of Thy love and might;

"To see converging everywhere
The answer to our daily prayer:
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
In every land by every one."

—"American Board Centennial Hymn,"
by Frances J. Dyer.

VI

THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

THE missionary movement had already been well launched by the "home missionary" efforts of the Jerusalem Christians. In the ordinary providence of God, visits of merchants and pilgrims, of travelers and colonists, to Jerusalem, had resulted in an extension of the new faith even to Damascus, illustrating the truth which is set forth in the popular missionary epigram of to-day, that "the light that shines brightest at home, shines farthest abroad."

How it Spread.

Persecution now increased many fold the number of missionaries. A wonderful work of grace was wrought in Samaria.[1] An Ethiopian government official went back to Africa a joyful believer in the Christ of whom the prophet spoke.[2] The Gospel was preached throughout Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, with such power that the body of Christians could be referred to as the Church in these sections.[3]

A Mighty Miracle.

Now comes an event which proved epoch-making in the history of the Christian missionary movement. Saul, the persecutor, is converted to

[1] Acts 8: 4-25. [2] Acts 8: 26-39. [3] Acts 9: 31.

the faith for whose extinction he had labored. "That blessed war of aggression which Jesus Christ wages upon the evil world is a war which is made to maintain itself. Christ's soldiers are His captured enemies. Every soul won from resistance to the Cross is marked at once with the Cross-badge, and sent into the field to win others. Of this, the most notable instance in history is the conversion of Saul. Jesus Christ never encountered a bitterer or an abler foe; Jesus Christ never won a mightier captain for His army of light."

The Man's Call.

To take the measurement of this man's manhood would require a whole book of biography. To take the measurement of this man's message would require a work on theology. There is space here only for a glance at his missionary call. (1) It was a call which came with conversion, as indeed should be the case with every Christian. Enlistment in missionary service is not an exceptional experience belonging to the few, or to some advanced stage of the Christian life. It is a common duty of every Christian commoner. (2) Paul's call was to world-wide missionary service. It was to go before Gentiles, before royalty, and before his own people.[4] (3) It was a call to hardship.[5] Why not? Shall the service of Self claim effort and struggle, and the

[4] Acts 9: 15; 26: 17. [5] Acts 9: 16.

service of Christ claim only ease and convenience?

A Tireless Worker.

This man, thus called, was the mightiest single impulse which God gave to that early Christian movement. The narrative of his labors will be found in separate treatises.[6] But from Damascus to Arabia, from Arabia to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Tarsus, from Tarsus to the country round about, then to Antioch, and then on a missionary journey which took him through Tarsus, Perga, Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe,—thus did this restless missionary leader, restless only in his passion for Christ's Kingdom, journey about during the first fifteen years of his Christian life.

The Anti-Missionary Spirit

Farther Still

It is the year 50 A. D. Two decades have passed since Pentecost. The missionary fires have been burning steadily, and the Christian faith has spread surprisingly. It is in Jerusalem, where it started, but it has also reached to Samaria; it has traversed Palestine; it has reached Caesarea and won Cornelius; it has crossed the water to Cyprus; it is in Tarsus and at Antioch; it has been carried into several provinces of Asia Minor; perhaps it is in Rome. From a geogra-

[6] Farrar's "Life and Work of St. Paul," Speer's "The Man Paul."

phical point of view, there seems no ground for criticism. But the stream has run narrow, if it has run deep and far. There are those in the Christian camp who would limit Christianity to the Jewish race. "Within those limits it had its origin," they say, "within those limits let it abide." Their utmost concession is that it shall be offered to Gentiles who will agree, when they accept Christianity, to accept also the observance of the Jewish law. A great issue is at stake. Missions are at stake. Nay, Christianity itself is at stake. But it is Missions that will make the issue clear, and it is Missions that will forge the weapons of defence, and it is Missions which will furnish the great defenders of the faith, and it is Missions which will win—win the battle for World Christianity. The story of the Great Council, called to settle the question, is narrated in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. To the question, "Is the Jewish law binding upon the Gentile?" it answered explicitly and emphatically "No." To the question, "Is the observance of the Jewish law a ground of salvation with the Jew?" it answered implicitly, "No."

A Supreme Issue.

A Great Victory.

It was a great victory. Paul had a great hand in it. So did Peter and James. But the Holy Spirit Himself stood back of all these, and wrested victory out of defeat. Christianity was saved. Missions were justified.

Farther Expansion

Ready for the World.

Freed from the bondage of Judaism, Christianity stood ready to be applied universally. To be sure, most Jewish Christians held fast to the Jewish ritual, and others even urged that "it was better" that Gentiles should adhere to it too, but the Council at Jerusalem gave the right of way to a Christianity unhampered by Jewish ritual. Into the work of extending the faith thus set free from encumbrances, Paul flung himself with a devotion which took no measure of itself, but took notice only of the greatness of the love of Christ and of the magnitude of the task to be performed. Had Paul's hardships been endured by a soldier fighting for his country, immortal fame would have been his meed. Paul scarcely thinks them worthy of mention. " 'Tis nothing," he says, "the love of Christ constraineth me." Thus he passes on to greater sacrifices, that through them he may attain to greater usefulness. More than once, yes, five times, his back is bared to the Jewish lash and thrice to the Roman lictor's rods. In the middle of his career, Paul makes incidental reference to shipwrecks, three in number, besides a perilous night and day spent on the deep. He cannot stop to count the times he was led as a common prisoner to the public jail. At times indeed the heroic spirit

What Matter!

seems to give way. He speaks of "tears, and trembling, and desolation of heart, and utter restlessness." Then recovering strength, he flings himself once more into his work, bemoaning his weakness only for this reason, lest through it the cause of Christ should be hindered. Let men call him mad, if they will only accept the Christ he presents. Let men hold him in utter contempt, if only they will admire the Christ of whom he speaks. Antioch with its outlying districts, Pamphylia, Galatia, Macedonia, Greece, Eastern Asia with its great metropolis Ephesus, have all been occupied for Christ. Paul's face is set toward Italy and Rome. Persecution itself lends a hand to carry out his missionary purpose. The Roman government pays his passage to Rome. Paul goes in chains. At last comes the end. Our survey has scarcely allowed a sentence for every year of sacrifice, and scarcely a word for every form of suffering. What matter! Paul himself passes these by. Chains and imprisonment? They are not worth a thought. Sacrifices? Nay, that is the wrong word: "This service is a privilege; the love of Christ constraineth me." In the gloom of a Roman dungeon and with his long day's work almost done, Paul pens our last message from him. Looking back over the thirty years of his life which he had poured out so unstintingly as a libation to his Lord, not a thought

To the Regions Beyond.

of regret suggests itself. Only satisfaction! It was worth while. "Henceforth there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness," he says, "which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me at that day." Then, disclaiming the thought that he had done any more than others too would be impelled to do by that same constraining love of Christ, he adds, "And not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing."

The End.

Thus we come to the end of this man's life of service, this man who was the great Missionary Apostle. Of the other apostles and their labors we know but little. A tradition, interesting to those laboring in the Nile Valley, is the one which asserts that Peter, with Mark, founded the Christian Church in Egypt. But our eyes should not be fixed only upon the great leaders of the Church. Much of the most effective work can be traced to the missionary labors of the rank and file. A small taper may light a great flame, and indeed may be carried far afield when a bonfire cannot even be lifted. The New Testament narrative gives many evidences of the labors of these obscure missionaries.[7]

Methods, Audiences, Places.

How varied were the forms of carrying to the world the Gospel of redemption through Christ: formal preaching, formal teaching, public debate,

[7] Acts 9: 10, 25, 31; 11: 19-21; 13: 1; 18: 22; 19: 1; 28: 14, 15.

personal work, praise and gladness, prayer, miracles, discipline, official organization, the endurance of persecution, and martyrdom itself. How varied, too, are the audiences recorded: gatherings at the public Sabbath service, group meetings on other days, Jews, Samaritans, a royal treasurer, a Roman officer, city magistrates, Greek philosophers, governors and their wives. How varied, too, are the places in which this testimony for Christ is given: the Temple, the synagogues, the streets, court-rooms, both ecclesiastical and civil, the riverside, the theater, the school, private homes, the public jail, and on shipboard.

Last Third of Century.

During the last third of the first century of the Christian era, Christianity continued to spread rapidly. "Our information is scanty, but there can be no doubt about the fact. We have already noted its wide diffusion in the last years of Paul. That it entered Egypt with much power is proved by the remains of early Christian literature in that land from early in the second century. There is also reason to believe that it entered Arabia and Parthia, and possibly India, as well as, in the west, Germany and Gaul. It touched Spain and perhaps Britain; while throughout the central parts of the empire it had its adherents in every country. The language of the Revelation (*e. g.*, 7: 9) implies that the new faith included representatives from all nations. Clement of Rome (A.

D. 96) refers to the apostles as 'preaching everywhere in city and country.' Ignatius (A. D. 110) writes of 'bishops settled in the farthest parts (of the earth).' Pliny, governor of Bithynia and Pontus in A. D. 112, found the Christians so numerous that the worship of the temples had severely suffered. It is probable that by the close of the century companies of believers existed in all the larger cities and many of the smaller towns of the empire, and that the new religion was represented from the Atlantic to the Indus, and from Germany to Egypt and Arabia."[8]

Two Centuries of Heroism

Persecution and Heroism.

The second and third centuries of the Christian era might well be described as centuries of heroism, because of the noble devotion, not of all, nor of the majority perhaps, but of so very many members of the Church of Christ. It was a missionary period. It was also a period of persecution. It was this that made the missionary zeal of the Christians of this period the more noteworthy. "On the Roman roads built for military expeditions, down the current of strange rivers, into forest recesses, into the thick of city life where the convention of culture and the cruelties of paganism offered bitter welcome, they went

How They Went.

[8] G. T. Purves's "The Apostolic Age," page 295.

forward to their destiny, evermore dreamers who made the dream come true. Their lot was not an easy one. They were accused of atrocious crimes; lampooned; cursed; charged with treason; outlawed by the judges; and sent to the stake, when a single word of acknowledgment of the divinity of the emperor would have ensured their liberty. Juvenal may have been an eye-witness of the carnival in Nero's gardens when he tells how

'At the stake they shine,
Who stand with throat transfixed, and smoke and burn.'

Their veins might supply rivers with bloody tides; their only honor be the accusation of shameful deeds; their homes be dens; their faith in Jesus be called 'atheism,' and the lion's maw their goal; but even so they went smilingly forward—to victory.

Girls as Well as Men.

"Tender girls joined stalwart men in the march to the grave. In one of the persecutions through which the early Church rose to more vigorous life, a number of martyrs suffered in Carthage, among whom were two young women, Perpetua and Felicitas. All the prisoners were condemned to fight with the wild beasts on the birthday of the Caesar. One of the martyrs, Saturus, was speedily released from life by the bite of a leopard. Perpetua and Felicitas were

put into a net and exposed to a wild cow. On her hair and dress becoming disarranged, Perpetua quietly reordered them, modest to the last. Being about to receive the death-blow, Perpetua called to the soldier, Pudens, 'Be strong, and think of my faith, and let not all this make thee waver, but strengthen thee.' They greeted one another with the kiss of peace, and were slain with daggers. When the gladiator came near who was to kill Perpetua, his hand trembled. She took his hand, guided it to her throat, and died as calmly as if falling asleep. It needed no prophet to tell the future of such assurance, for the endurance of the Christians wore out the hate of the heathens. No efforts at annihilation could prevail when love had armed the sufferer for the conflict. The executioner might behead the Bishop Sixtus in the Catacombs, and scatter his blood on the spot where he had just celebrated the Lord's Supper, and four days later roast his deacon Laurentius in an iron chair—the victory of the truth was sure to fall to those who loved it sincerely."[9]

General Summary.

As a result of this missionary devotion we find Christianity well established in Cappadocia. Armenia is officially a Christian country. In Bithynia, the imperial court itself is full of Christians.

[9] R. T. Stevenson's "The Missionary Interpretation of History," page 25.

There are frequent references to Christians in the central provinces of Asia Minor. The northwestern section of Asia Minor is well occupied by the new faith, as are also the north and northwest coasts of the Black Sea. Of course, Italy and Greece have been entered, and Christianity has moved northward past Upper Italy, and has at least reached into Gaul, Belgium, Germany. Northern Africa is a stronghold of Christianity, with over a hundred bishoprics. Even England has been touched, for in 316 A. D. there are three bishops, from London, York and Lincoln, who attend the synod of Arles. It was a wonderful record, and contrasts sharply with the record of succeeding periods.

Eclipse of the Missionary Ideal

Church and State.

In 323, Constantine became master of the whole Roman world. His reign marks an epoch in the history of Christianity, for Constantine was the first Christian emperor. In his day Christianity was made the Empire's religion, and Church and State joined hands. But what the Church gained in political prestige, she lost in spiritual power. The causes of spiritual decline are too many to be enumerated here. The outworkings of that downward movement call for a survey of more than a millennium of Church

history. We would not disparage the missionary labors of the faithful few, of the "remnant" of the new Israel, of the spiritual Church *within* the visible Church. If opportunity permitted, it would be well to measure anew the noble efforts put forth from time to time to carry the Gospel to the "regions beyond." We should tell how Succat (St. Patrick, as he is better known), heard the call of Ireland, "We must entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us." Of the work which he and his fellow-laborers accomplished, Maclear says, "At a time when clan feuds and bloodshed were rife, and princes rose and fell, and all was stormy and changeful, they had covered the island with monastic schools, where the Scriptures were studied, ancient books collected and read, and native missionaries trained for their own country, and for the remotest parts of the European continent." All of this before the close of the fifth century.

The Faithful Few.

We should tell the story of Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths (318-388 A. D.). Then the story of missions would carry us back to the British, and we would speak of Columbia, Columbanus and Gallus, of Gregory the Great and the missionary St. Augustine. We should speak, too, of Boniface and how he carried the Gospel through the land that is now Germany.

Among the Goths.

We should then speak of Anskar, who labored

among the fierce sea-kings of Jutland and Sweden in the middle of the ninth century; and of Cyrillus and Methodius, who carried the Gospel to the Bulgarians toward the close of this same century.

Three Barren Centuries.

Then we would be compelled to pass over three barren centuries. Does some one exclaim, "But were not the Crusades missionary movements?" Well, we do not find them so. We do not deny the high aim, the devotion, the courage, displayed by these movements, but they were not missionary, they were military. They were not for the proclamation of a gospel, but for the conquest of sacred places. But we would mention Raymond Lull (1236-1315 A. D.), the lonely forerunner of missions to Moslems; and then—well, then we should quote Warneck, "Missionary activity, which had been growing more and more external, came gradually to a standstill in the fourteenth century."

The Reformation.

Thus are we brought down to the age of the Reformation. What did the leaders of the Reformation teach on this subject? Warneck proves conclusively that missionary activity was not even within the horizon of their thought. It may be possible to write an apology for their attitude, but it is scarcely possible to deny the fact. On the other hand, every one will recognize the in-

estimable value of the Reformation in giving us a pure gospel to promulgate.

The Shameful Record.

These references to the missionary record of the Church are scanty enough. They scarcely give a word for each page of interesting narrative, but they are made lest the next statement should seem a wholly superficial generalization. And that statement is that *the Church's missionary activity throughout these centuries of the Christian era is shamefully, inexplicably trivial.* Such missionary work as was done was the result of no general movement of the Church of God, but the work of single individuals and small bands of men, whom the organized Church for the most part ignored and only later generations honored. Furthermore, even the most detailed account of missionary effort leaves great gaps of decades and centuries and great sections of the Church during which and by which no missionary work at all was done. Finally, if we take all that was done in the first eighteen centuries of the Christian era, the total amount is pitifully small. We take a well-known Church history of 664 pages. Only 76 pages of this narrative are devoted to the recital of the spread of the Gospel. A double inference is possible: either the history is inaccurate and the Church has been active in ways unrecorded, or the history presents a true picture and the Church has only

spent about one-tenth of its energy—if that—in carrying out even remotely the divine program. We believe the latter inference is the sad but correct one.

The Plan Unrealized.

Thus we see the great missionary program which Christ gave to His Church, unrealized. As with Israel in the Period of Preparation, so with the Church in the Period of Application, the people chosen of God lost sight of their high calling, narrowed their world-wide mission, and, through disobedience and selfishness, allowed the missionary ideal to suffer eclipse. Yet must we recognize that in the dark days of the Christian era, as in the dark days of the Old Testament dispensation, there have been marvelous overrulings of human disobedience, gracious forbearance on the part of God and, above all, an unbroken succession of devoted souls, who, because their hearts were pure, were able to see their Lord's World Missionary Plan. Thus are we brought to the modern missionary period.

The Vision Unveiled Again

In the year 1910, three great gatherings were held which may well symbolize the unveiling of the missionary vision in this our day.

On the opening day of the year, 3,747 young men and women were gathered together, in the

Student Volunteers.

city of Rochester, N. Y., for the sixth convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, marking, however, the twenty-fifth year of the Movement's life. The theme of this great gathering, representing 735 educational institutions of America, was *World Conquest.* The rallying cry of this Movement is: THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD IN THIS GENERATION.

Laymen.

In May of the same year, there gathered in the city of Chicago, 4,219 men, for the most part business men, from 47 different States, with others from Canada and others from abroad. The theme of this great gathering was *World Conquest.* Its opening message was: THE WILL OF CHRIST FOR THE WORLD.

World Conference.

In June of the same year, there gathered in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, a company of 1,200 accredited delegates, besides a still larger number in parallel sessions, representing the whole world of Protestant Christianity and the whole world of missionary activity. The theme of this great gathering was *World Conquest.* The dominant note was: OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD.

Their Significance.

These three great gatherings bespeak, as no array of isolated missionary facts may do, the modern missionary period to which Christ's Church has come, and the unveiling before her eyes of the Missionary Vision for the consummation of the divine Plan for World Redemption.

And these three great gatherings symbolize mighty forces which are needed for the realization of that Vision, forces which have not been available in the past through the unwillingness of man, but forces which the Spirit of God has now placed at the disposal of the Church for her mighty task.

(1) The Rochester Convention symbolizes *surrendered life.*

(2) The Chicago Convention symbolizes *surrendered wealth.*

(3) The Edinburgh Conference symbolizes *Christian unity* and *Divine sufficiency.*

What Might it not Mean?

The movements which symbolize these forces, which are now becoming available for World Conquest, were not born of man, but of God. Their synchronous appearance is significant of the eternal purposes of God. It is, to use a phrase of Mr. John R. Mott, "the time of times." It is "the decisive hour of Christian missions." Whatever faithlessness may have prevented in the past the earlier fulfilment of the divine Plan for World Redemption, the Christian Church once again has come to the border of the Promised Land, and may enter in, accomplishing the will of its Lord by world evangelization. Does there not come a thrill of sublime imagining as we stand over against so great a possibility of our day and generation: that with the Church's obe-

dience to the command of its Lord, the great eternal purposes of God might swing upon their hinges and usher in that Great Next which lies beyond the age in which we live.

CHAPTER VII

The Individual and God's Plan

"I worship thee, sweet will of God!
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I seem
To love thee more and more.

"Thou wert the end, the blessed rule
Of our Saviour's toils and tears;
Thou wert the passion of His heart
Those three and thirty years.

"And He hath breath'd into my soul
A special love of thee,
A love to lose my will in His,
And by that loss be free."

—*F. W. Faber.*

"He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

—*John, the Apostle.*

"The lives which seem so poor, so low,
The hearts which are so cramped and dull,
The baffled hopes, the impulse slow;
Thou takest, touchest all, and lo!
They blossom to the beautiful."

VII

THE INDIVIDUAL AND GOD'S PLAN

THE one possession of every individual is life. Not all have wealth. Not all have social position. Not all have education. But every person in this world is at least the possessor of life.

My Life.

No theme is of greater interest to each individual than that which deals with *his life*. "I want to make the most of my life." "It will ruin my life." "I am going to put my life into this work!" How often we hear such remarks, and the entire thought of the speaker centers in the life which he calls *his*. There is here an anxiety, a sort of terrible earnestness, which belongs not only to youth, but also to the consideration of anything that is supremely important. And life is a supremely important subject: *my* life to *me; your* life to *you*. We each have but one life to live and we do not want that to be a mere experiment; a mere attempt at trying to fit a square peg into a round hole, or a round peg into a square hole.

What makes the problem of life all the more

So Many Possibilities.

difficult and trying, is the fact that, in this age of freedom and opportunity, we may start out in so many *different* directions. So many professions and callings, so many different ideals and types of life! We may be drawn to some one of these, attracted to it by our tastes or talents or ambitions. But the way is long and circuitous. The pathway often climbs steep hills and is rough. Shall we be equal to the task? Shall we be able to stand the heat of the day, and the labor of the journey, and arrive at the goal? Or are we to fail, and to find, at the last, our lives cast with other lives on the scrap heap of the world's failures? Where shall we get help in answering this question? Will we get help from the Book?

An Individual Life Plan

God has a Plan.

There is revealed in the Word of God a truth, whose beauty and power have made it the theme of many sermons.[1] It is the most magnificent conception of human life found anywhere in the world. It is the conception *that God has an individual life plan for each of His children.* Again and again, do we see the children of God living in the full assurance of this truth. To his brothers who with evil intentions had sold him as a slave, Joseph declared, "Now it was not you that sent

[1] Bushnell's Sermon, "Every Man's Life a Plan of God."

me hither, but God." To David came the message of Jehovah by the prophet Nathan, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over My people, over Israel; and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest." Of Cyrus, it was written by prophetic pen, "Thus saith Jehovah to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden . . . I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee . . . . I will gird thee." Of John the Baptist it is written, "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." And Paul inscribes himself "an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God." For each of His children God has a life plan. Up yonder in the mind and thought of God, already worked out, is a plan for the individual life.

Paul's Aim.

Paul, perhaps, more than any other, unfolds this splendid conception of life. Writing to the Philippians, he says, "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of *the high calling of God* in Christ Jesus."[2] That "high calling of God" was the divine plan for his life. Paul had accepted that plan. His great ambition now was to realize that plan in every detail.

Was it Presumptuous?

But is not this too daring a conception of life? Was not Paul a bit presumptuous in thinking

[2] Phil. 3: 14.

that his life could find a distinct place in the will and mind of God, that his life work could occupy the thought of God, and that he, Paul, had been separately, individually, specially called of God? Who was he? Lord Kelvin "reckons that there must be a thousand million suns and planets in space! In this measureless ocean of star-thronged space, our little earth is but a pin-point. If God, says one despairing astronomer, dispatched one of His angels to discover this tiny planet amongst the glittering hosts of His stars, it would be like sending a child out upon some vast prairie to find a speck of sand at the root of some blade of grass." And Paul was just one of a thousand million human beings living upon this pin-point of a planet. How could the Great Creator of the whole universe give separate thought to Paul's life, or even to the greatest movements of human life?

"What is it all but the murmur of gnats
In the gleam of a million, million suns!"

Dare to Believe it.

Yet Paul would dare to believe that God had a plan for his life. Nay, Paul was forced to believe this, unless he should reject the profoundest spiritual experiences of his life. Did not Christ seek him out on the Damascus road and say to him, "To this end have I appeared unto thee"? Had not the divinely commissioned

Ananias brought unto him the message, "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will." God then had a will for Paul, a plan for his life, a purpose for him to accomplish. Paul would not only believe this, he would surrender his life henceforth to the realization of that divine will. "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God."

Nor is it in a spirit of egotism that Paul records this inspiring truth, as though God had selected him alone among men and conceived a plan for his life only. Not so. Was Paul called of God? So were others. Paul was heaven-sent, but all men are heaven-sent if they only knew it. It was to share with others the comfort, the hope, the inspiration of this truth,—a truth applicable to human life everywhere—that he makes record of it in his letter to the Philippians.

There is then, no more inspiring conception of life than this: *That God has a plan for every life;* a separate plan for each separate life; a plan suited and fitted to each separate life; a plan possible of realization by each separate life; a plan for your life and a plan for mine.

Advantages of this Conception

Imitation Avoided.

No conception of life will deliver us so fully from the danger of base imitation of other lives.

Here is a common danger. We come under the influence of dominating personalities, and, consciously or unconsciously, our lives become awkward copies and false reproductions of these lives. Or, seeking to deliver ourselves from the influence of our environment, we fall into the opposite fault and become eccentric. Paul's conception of life offers a separate plan for each life. It is only human plans that are monotonously alike. God's plans show variety. No two are alike. God uses the pattern once, then throws away the moulding thought. Christ will not suffer Peter to become a John, and when Peter seeks to pry into John's future by asking, "And what shall this man do," the sharp rebuke is administered, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

"Men look about on other men,
And some behold with talents ten.
Alas! what further use to live,
For God to us but five did give?

"Don't waste thy life in idle tears,
Because an abler man appears,
But be thyself!"

And can a man be himself more truly than in realizing the plan of God for him?

Suited to Each Life.

This conception of life brings also the assurance of a life-calling for which we are fitted.

We often find men following professions for which they are manifestly unfitted. Business men who ought to have been preachers, preachers who ought to have been teachers, teachers who ought to have been lawyers. Parents may be careful in the choice of a life-work for their children, yet we all doubtless know of fatal mistakes made by loving parents who have forced their children into professions for which they were unfitted. Neither does a man fully know himself. His own judgment may err. Moses said to God, "Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent. Send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send." The book of Deuteronomy and the history of Israel prove that Moses did not know his own powers of speech and of leadership, but God knew them when He called him to become the deliverer of Israel. He Who created man and knows what is in man, He Who holds the future in His hand and disposes of the providences of men's lives, He it is Who can, and He alone can, issue to every life a high calling which will be measured to the talents and the gifts, the strength and the ability of that life.

Dignifies Life.

This conception of life also gives dignity to all the details of life. The humbler duties of life, if you are following God's plan, are a part of God's will, and as such, are worthy of the most faithful performance. If imprisonment, if sick-

ness, if delays came to Paul as he pressed toward his high calling, what matter? He could afford to wait as well as labor. He could afford to lie still and suffer as well as be active. These experiences were a part of God's will for him.

A Moslem Story.

The Mohammedans tell the story that Gabriel, while standing by the open gates of gold, was sent by God on a double errand. The one was to remind King Solomon of the hour of prayer which he was in danger of forgetting on an occasion of victory. The other was to help a little ant, grown weary in search of food and in danger of being swept away by the rain. To Gabriel both duties were of kingly dignity, for both were God's commands.

"Silently he left the Presence and prevented the King's sin,
And helped the little ant at entering in.
Naught is too high or low,
Too mean or mighty, if God wills it so."

So often defeated in the little struggles of life, so often unfaithful in the little duties of life, so often disheartened by the little vexations of life, do we not need the inspiring and inspiriting influence of this conception of life, which lifts the humblest duty out of the commonplace and gives it a place in the divine will and purpose?

This conception of life has the supreme ad-

vantage that it imparts an assurance of success. To the man who is following the plan of God for him, defeat and failure are impossible. No matter what may be the opposition, he has God on his side; and one with God is a majority. No matter what odds he is facing, victory is assured, for he is joined to the Invincible One. With Paul, he may exclaim, "If God is for us, who is against us?" Success Assured.

If, now, we wish to make this divine plan the great aim of our lives, an important question presses upon us.

The Discovery of the Plan

How may I discover the high calling of God? If it be true that God has a plan for my life, how may I discover what that plan is? How Discover it.

It is Paul again who will give us the answer to such a question. His answer is found in these three words: "In Christ Jesus."

It is true that much light comes to us from the advice of friends. The opinions of the people of God often reflect truly the will of God. We are also often guided helpfully by unusual providences in our lives, those occurrences over which we have no control, but which show forth the will of God because they are ordered by Him. It is also true that many helpful principles are to be Lesser Helps.

found in the Scriptures; the Word of God reveals the will of God. But we find the heart of divine revelation in these words: "God . . . hath spoken unto us in His Son."

The Supreme Guide.

After all, the inferences which we shall draw from the advice of friends, from the providences of our lives, from the statements of the Word of God, will all depend upon our attitude to Jesus Christ. In a profound and comprehensive sense, therefore, the revelation to each man of the plan of God for him is "in Christ Jesus."

Monotony.

Does some one object that thus a strange monotony will overtake human life, as one, and another, and another, take Jesus Christ as the pattern of their lives? Let us go out then into the fields and view the handiwork of God. Here is the rose with its beautiful red, and here the violet with its delicate hue, and yonder on the hillside the grass with its softest shades of green. Where did these get their coloring? You say from the sun. But the light of the sun is white; not red, not violet, not green. Yes, but in the pure white light of the sun the rose found what it needed to make it red, the violet found what it needed to give it its hue, the grass found what it needed to make it green. So Christ is the Light of the World! In the light of His life, rich and poor, old and young, learned and unlearned, men, women and children, all find what

is needed to reveal to each life its perfect type, and to enable each life to realize its perfect ideal. The revelation of the high calling of God for each life is "in Christ Jesus."

Perhaps some one says, "But I have not been able to get in Christ a vision of what my life should be. My high calling has not yet been revealed to me." So we may well ask how we must come to Christ to discover in Him God's plan for our individual lives.

As High Priest.

First of all, we must come to Christ *as to a High Priest.* There is no revelation of the will of God, until sacrifice has been offered, and sins have been taken away, and the past has been forgiven.

"My soul is sailing through the sea,
But the Past is heavy and hindereth me,
The Past hath crusted, cumbrous shells,
That hold the flesh of old sea-mells
About my soul.
The huge waves wash, the high waves roll
Each barnacle clingeth and worketh dole,
And hindereth me from sailing!
Old Past, let go and drop i' the sea
Till fathomless waters cover thee!
For I am living, but thou art dead;
Thou drawest back, I strive ahead
The day to find."

It is only as we get release from the past through our High Priest, that we can come,

through Him also, to a knowledge of the will of God for us.

As Lord. In the second place, we must come to Christ *as to a Lord and King*. He does not reveal the divine plan to the merely curious. "If any man willeth (*i. e.,* is willing) to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7: 17). The will of God is only for those who come with surrendered wills, *purposing to obey* the command of their Lord and King, the moment it is revealed.

As Prophet. In the third place, we must come to Christ *as to a Prophet,* finding in His life the underlying principle of God's revelation for our individual lives. This is what Christ Himself said: *"As* the Father hath sent Me, *even so* send I you" (John 20: 21). Now for what did the Father send Christ into the world? We must find that out. It holds the secret of our life-calling. Did the Father send Christ into the world *to enjoy life?* We may be sure the beauties of this world were never so beautiful as in His eyes.

> "The olives they were not blind to Him,
> The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
> The thorn-tree had a mind to Him,
> When into the woods He came."

But we will all agree that Jesus Christ did not come into this world to enjoy life. Did the Father send Him, then, into the world *to develop*

character? So many Christians think this is the great aim of life here on earth. Thank God, we do develop character here, being transformed from one degree of glory into another degree of glory into the image of our Lord. But is this the chief purpose of life here on earth? Was it Christ's? We do not know what the Incarnation may have meant to the Godhead, but we can safely say that Jesus Christ was not sent into this world to develop character.

Why was He sent?

Why, then, was He sent? We must find out, for it holds the secret of God's plan for our lives. He Himself tells us, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10).

"*As* the Father hath sent Me, *even so* send I you,"—"to seek and to save that which was lost." Every life, then, is to be built into the great redemptive purpose of God. *The plan of God for every individual life is related to the great Plan for World Redemption.* What a conception this is! My life finds a place in the great Plan for World Redemption which is sweeping through the centuries. My life becomes related to its triumphs in the past and to its glories in the future. A great redemptive arch is being built, which spans Time and reaches into Eternity. Christ is the keystone of that arch, but my life

may also be built into it somewhere, if I will accept God's plan for my individual life.

Not all Preachers.

This does not mean that all men are called to be preachers or formal missionaries, although undoubtedly many are. But it does mean that, whatever the profession and calling,—medicine, business, law, industry, home life, teaching,—the life shall be somehow related, and *related fully and directly,* to God's great Plan for redeeming humanity. The high calling of God "in Christ Jesus" was revealed to Ian Keith Falconer, and for him it meant to lay aside his literary work at Cambridge and go forth to Arabia, there to live and there to die as a herald of the cross. It was revealed to Charles Gordon, and for him it meant to be a Christian soldier, repressing rebellion, overthrowing slavery, and at last making a supreme appeal to the Church and the Christian world for the redemption of the Sudan by his martyr death at Khartum. It was revealed to Dr. Bernardo, and for him it meant to go into the East End of London during the cholera scare of 1866, and, finding his first waif, to conceive a plan for rescuing outcasts, establishing innumerable homes and saving over sixty thousand boys and girls. It was revealed to William Carey, and it led the cobbler to India, there to become a linguist, a translator, a teacher, a missionary. It was revealed to Mary Hunter, and it meant that

she should be the mother and inspirer of David Livingstone, who set in motion forces for healing the "open sore" of Africa.

Beyond this we may not go in defining the life plans of God for men, but thus far we may confidently go and assert that no life which stands unrelated to God's great redemptive purpose is following the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The Realization of the Plan

Still another question demands an answer. It is this, Knowing God's plan for my individual life, how may I realize it? Three general answers to that question may be given, although the details must vary with each life and with the changing circumstances of life.

Preparation.

1. To realize the divine plan will require, first of all, *Preparation.* In God's World Plan we found a Period of Preparation. So too, in His plan for the individual life, there will be days of preparation. God grant that increasingly the vision of God's plan may come to young men and women, who are yet in that period of life in which they may best make preparation for the realization of the divine plan for their lives! It makes it possible for God to work so much more powerfully and so much more gloriously when His plan has been recognized in the early years

of life, which were especially meant to be days of preparation, although also days of practice. How much of preparation Jesus Christ made for the plan of God for His life! Some thirty years were spent quietly at Nazareth, during which He "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Surely there was need for haste in His performance of His mission! Why not plunge into His life-work at twenty-one? Our age, with its foolish, feverish haste, needs to learn that God's appointed time for preparation is "time saved," if we would realize the divine plan.

Physical.

There must be *physical* preparation. Out yonder in the heart of the years to come are burdens to be carried, and battles to be fought, and vigils to be kept, and great strain to be endured, and for these, physical strength is required. Given equal powers otherwise, victory goes to the man whose physical strength enables him to carry great burdens without breaking. "How often is it," said a speaker at a great convention, "that some self-denial in the way of food, exercise, or time of going to bed or getting up, some habit not evil in itself perhaps, may change under God our whole work for Him. The other day I was dining at a house in England and one of the daughters, a girl of about seventeen, came up to say 'Good-night.' I remarked that she was going up early—soon after nine. Her reply was:

'Father says that I must have eight hours in bed, as I have not been strong; and every five minutes that I spend after ten o'clock in getting to bed, means that I have five minutes less with God before breakfast'."

Intellectual.

There must also be *intellectual* development. The Christian religion is the profoundest religion in the world: the best intellectual development is needed to grasp and present its truths. The world missionary enterprise is the most colossal enterprise that has ever been launched in human life: the best intellectual development is needed in all who would relate their lives to its activities. When the Church at Antioch sent forth missionaries, it was not their second rate or third rate men who went, but their best and strongest, Paul and Barnabas. Only our best intellectual development will suffice for the splendid projects which God commits to humanity for realization.

Spiritual.

There must also be *spiritual* development. This means cleanness of life. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (I Cor. 3: 16). Alas, how many spiritual battles have been lost, because this moral and spiritual preparation was neglected. Happy the man who can enter the conflict with the reassuring confidence:

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

Spiritual development will also mean a direct and personal acquaintance with God. God's plan can be carried forward only by God's strength, and how shall that man renew his strength, who knows not the secret of approach to God. As he goes out to realize the plan of God for his life, he will find others "already under the fullest strain. He dare not draw on them for spiritual life. If he has no springs in him where the Living Water is flowing, woe to him! Can he give to others if his own supply is scant?"

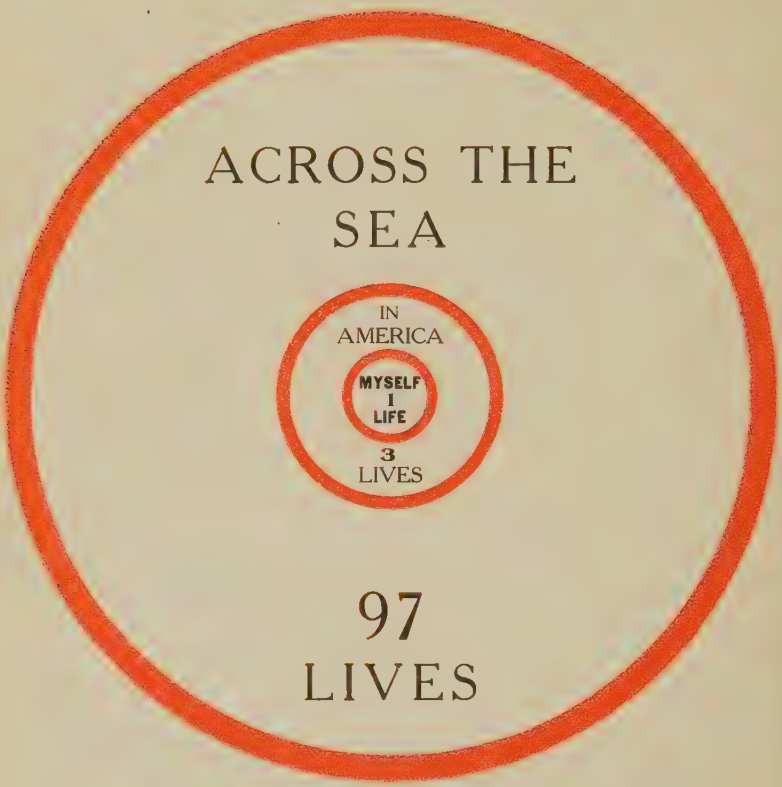
Physical, intellectual and spiritual preparation is needed to help us realize God's plan for the individual life.

Service.

2. In the second place, to realize God's plan there must be *Service.*

Witnessing.

One form of service is *witnessing.* In the life of the early Church, we noted what a supreme place this had, and we noted how this witnessing was the secret of the growth of the Church. A marvelous prominence is given to this Christian duty in a verse of Revelation: "And they overcame him, because of the blood of the Lamb, and *because of the word of their testimony;* and they loved not their life even unto death" (Rev. 12: 10). God's World Plan of Redemption can never



AVERAGE RESPONSIBILITY

The average responsibility of every member of the United Presbyterian Church is illustrated by this diagram. This responsibility is three fold:

First, for one's own life. This stands at the center, for out it are the issues of life-giving service.

Second, for three other lives, in America. Census figures show that for every member of an evangelical Christian Church in America, there are three who are not professing Christians. Responsibilty extends to these.

Third, for ninety-seven lives across the sea. Of these some fifty-eight are in Egypt, some thirty-three are in India, and six are in Sudan.

This is the average life's responsibility. Would you want your life reckoned as being below the average? What, then, are you doing to discharge this average responsibility? Some will shirk. *Will you?* And because some will shirk, others must carry more than the average responsibility. *Will you?*

be realized by organized missions, unless God's plan for the individual life be realized also in *witnessing*. "Every believer a soul-winner—that does not mean only, among other things, but first of all, as the chief reason of his existence. In every believer, the supreme, the sole end of our being is, the saving of souls."[3] How greatly we need to learn this truth in Western Lands! What a contrast to our dumb Christianity is the witnessing joy and the witnessing power of the converts of so many mission fields. Let Korean Christianity preach to us: "Thousands of them last year gave from one week to one month each to the work of proclaiming the Gospel in neighboring and in distant communities. It is probable that a larger proportion of Korean Christians have won others to Christ than of those in the Church of any other land. Often *the test question* in connection with admission to Church membership is, 'Have you led some other soul to Jesus Christ?' "[4]

Another form of service is *stewardship*. This is the service which money makes possible. And what is a true conception of money? Dr. Schauffler says: "Money is myself." Then he illustrates after this fashion: I am a day laborer; I

Stewardship.

[3] A. Murray's "The Key to the Missionary Problem," page 141.

[4] J. R. Mott's "The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions," page 77.

get two dollars a day; the two dollars which I put in my pocket at the close of the day is two dollars' worth of my muscle, turned into money and put in my pocket. Or I am a clerk and I get twenty dollars a week. The money I get on Saturday night represents twenty dollars worth of myself as clerk. Or I am a merchant; I balance my books at the end of the week and I find myself one thousand dollars to the good. That one thousand dollar check that I may draw represents one thousand dollars' worth of myself as merchant, turned into money and deposited in the bank. Money is, therefore, *stored-up life*: yesterday's life, last week's life, last year's life, the life of a past generation.

Stored-up Life.

And this stored-up life belongs to the owner. It is his as truly as his own life is his. He can put it to work, just as he might put himself to work, and the stored-up life will work and do things to the limit of its capacity just as the man himself can work to the limit of his capacity. The only difference between the man and his money is, that the man represents *to-day's* working power and the money represents *yesterday's* working power. And the man controls both.

Because of this fact, there is no real consecration of life to God without the consecration of such money or wealth as is owned. To consecrate the life without money is virtually to say: "Here,

Lord, I give to Thee that part of myself which relates to to-day, but that which relates to yesterday I keep as my own."

Money and God's Will.

Because money is life, the will of God extends to it, too, and it also must be subjected absolutely to Christ as Lord. It also enters into God's great Plan for World Redemption.

Money is therefore no more to be despised, or wasted, or ignored, than is breath, or intellect, or talent. It is to be used. This stored-up life can be sent to distant places and released in work. It will build school houses; it will plant churches; it will establish hospitals; it will preach the Gospel. And in every such act, it is the owner's life which is being projected to these distant lands. His feet thus move about in places of need; his hands minister to human want; his lips speak the glad tidings to lives whom he has never known, but into whose faces he will yet gaze in the Kingdom of Light. The obligation therefore on every life related to Christ is, "Go or send." And it has been well pointed out by Dr. J. D. Rankin that from the point of view of surrender and sacrifice, *sending* should involve just as much as *going*.

The Tithe.

Over this part of human life, which has ever had such a tendency to escape from its proper submission to the divine will, God has set the tithe as a symbol and seal of His sovereignty.

This symbol of divine sovereignty may be lost in a joyful surrender to service which goes far *beyond* the ordinance of the tithe. But it is at his peril, if not to his condemnation, that a man will venture to remove from his life this sign of God's sovereignty over his possessions, and give *less* to the Lord than the tithe. Like a shield of burnished gold shines the law of the tithe through the story of sacred history from Genesis[5] to Malachi.[6] While in the New Testament, to a tithe-observing age, the messages of Christ and of the Apostles point to that deeper fellowship with God which will subject, not less, but more to His service and to His redemptive purposes.[7]

Prayer.

Another form of service is that of *prayer*. Prayer is work. It is work in that it does things. It is also work in that it is exhausting. Such prayer, however, is something more than what commonly goes by that name. It is more than an impulse. It is more than an emotion. It is an activity which has its root in the will. It is an activity which a Spirit-guided human will engages in, laying hold of God for blessings.[8] Such prayer may become a great agony in its earnestness.[9] We recall the words of J. Hudson Taylor,

[5] Gen. 14: 20. [6] Mal. 3: 10.
[7] Matt. 5: 20; 23: 23; 13: 44-46; I Cor. 16: 2.
[8] Rom. 8: 26, 27. [9] Rom. 9: 1, 2; 10: 1

"If we are simply to pray to the extent of a simple and pleasant and enjoyable exercise, and know nothing of watching in prayer, we shall not draw down the blessing that we may."

Its Large Place.

Now God has given prayer a large place in the relation which the individual life may sustain to the great World Plan. There are many things which the Plan calls for, which are quite impossible from all human point of view. And God wants these impossible things to occur, and He has set prayer as the agency by which the impossible can be made to occur.

Prayer Answered.

"In 1886, the China Inland Mission had 200 missionaries. A number of them met that year for an eight days' conference for Bible study and also for united prayer. While they were together they were led to unite in prayer that God would thrust forth into that Mission during the year 100 additional missionaries; and before the conference closed one of them suggested that they have a praise meeting to thank God for answering the prayer, because he said, 'We shall not all of us be able to come together for that purpose a year hence.' They did so. Within the following year there were 600 who applied to be sent out; the Mission selected and sent out 100 of them.

Money Secured.

"It required an increase in their budget from $100,000 to $150,000. Hudson Taylor and some

of his co-workers have called attention to the fact that they were led, on account of the pressure of their work, to offer this prayer, that, if it were the will of God, the $50,000 needed might be received in large amounts. Within a year in eleven gifts, ranging from $2,500 to over $12,000, the whole sum came." This is service through prayer.[10]

Life.

Yet another form of service is that of *life*. Not all can go, but all should be willing to go. This high standard of loyalty and submission should characterize all. Then, some must go. Else how shall the Plan for World Redemption be carried forward? Just because the World Plan requires that many go, we may be sure that God's individual life-plans for many, are that they shall go. And if this be God's plan for their individual lives, they must break through hindrances which would prevent them from going. Every circumstance of life is not a guiding providence. There are circumstances which men are meant to conquer, if they would realize the divine will for their lives. And the bravest get through.

The Leader.

"Now to the common breed," says Bishop Brent, "the unwonted is the impossible,—things as they have been are sacred and must be held

[10] J. R. Mott's "The Pastor and Modern Missions," page 195.

inviolable, and everything but the present order is disorder. It is the part of a Leader to confute the unbrave and to disregard the worship of things as they are, in his essay to reach things as they ought to be. Unknown country may be dangerous; lions, perhaps, will be in the way. But the Leader sees security in the midst of danger and rather likes lions." [11]

Lest these strong words should seem to invite wilfulness, we need only add that in the investment of life we are to daily submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He interprets to us the will of God. If we study the life of Paul, we shall find he was guided rather by the leadings of the Spirit, than influenced by external circumstances in life.[12]

Dependence on Christ.

3. Finally, there is a third requirement for the realization of God's plan for the individual life. There must be not only preparation, not only service in its fourfold form; there must also be *Dependence upon Jesus Christ.* And this must be, not lastly, but first and last and all the while. There must be this supremely. Going forth to realize the low and unworthy ideals of our own human devising, we find our strength insufficient. How then shall we be able to realize, in our own strength, the infinite and perfect plan of

[11] C. H. Brent's "Leadership," page 102.
[12] Acts 16: 6, 7, 10; I Cor. 16: 9; II Tim. 4: 14-18.

God for our individual lives? Alone, we cannot do it. We can only do it through Him Who is not only the wisdom of God, but also the *power* of God. We can only do it through Him Who is not only the Truth, but also the *Way* to the Truth. As the revelation of the divine plan was "in Christ Jesus," so too must the *realization* of the plan be "in Christ Jesus." Only in the spirit of those ancient lines, can we hope to attain to the will of God for our individual lives:

"Christ, as a light,
Illumine and guide me!
Christ as a shield o'ershadow and cover me!
Christ be under me, Christ be over me!
Christ be beside me
On left hand and right!
Christ be before me, behind me, about me,
Christ this day be within and without me!

"Christ, the lowly and meek,
Christ the All-Powerful, be
In the heart of each to whom I speak,
In the mouth of each who speaks to me!
In all who draw near me
Or see me or hear me."

CHAPTER VIII

The Church and God's Plan

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." —*Paul, the Apostle.*

"The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord:
She is His new creation
By water and the Word;
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride,
With His own Blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

—*S. J. Stone.*

"Be quite sure that the place of missions in the life of the Church must be the central place, and none other. That is what matters. Let people get hold of that, and it will tell—it is the merest commonplace to say it—it will tell for us at home as it will tell for those afield. Secure for that thought its true place, in our plans, our policy, our prayers, and then—why then, the issue is His, not ours. But it may well be that if that come true, 'there be some standing here to-night who shall not taste of death till they see,'—here on earth, in a way we know not now,—'the Kingdom of God come with power.'"—*Archbishop of Canterbury,* at the Edinburgh Conference.

VIII

THE CHURCH AND GOD'S PLAN

THE word "church" is used with a number of different meanings. We speak of "that church across the street," and we mean a building. We speak of "the leading church in town," and we mean not a building, but people who constitute a congregation. We refer to "the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the United Presbyterian Church," and we mean these denominations or communions. There is still another use of the word. Paul says, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church."[1] It is in this sense that we find the word chiefly used in the Scriptures although it is also used with the second meaning already referred to.[2] The Church, according to this larger and deeper meaning, is sometimes called the Church General. It is "the spiritual body of the redeemed, apart from tangible organization, since no organization is coex-

Several Meanings.

The Church General.

[1] Eph. 5: 25-27. [2] Gal. 1: 2.

tensive with the Church." In the Scriptures, very many beautiful figures are used to set forth the Church in this sense. It is called "the Bride"[3] of Christ, "the Body"[4] of Christ, "the holy city Jerusalem."[5] Every believer, whatever his sex, or age, or calling, or denomination, or race, or nationality, is a member of this Church. His relation to the Church is maintained through the Holy Spirit, Who abides in his life and in the lives of all believers. This Church is always one. Its unity is maintained by the Holy Spirit Who abides in the life of every true believer. When a man is converted, he is joined to this body of believers in Christ. The Holy Spirit makes him a member of this Church.

The Invisible Church.

But this is the Church General. Its organization is not visible. Its membership is not known, save to God. Those who are nominal Christians but who are not truly converted, are not members of this Church, even though they have their names enrolled as members of a church. The value of this conception of the Church, is that it emphasizes the essential oneness in Christ of all believers. It ought to make each division of the Church and each individual believer very patient, very kind and charitable, very open-minded, and very sympathetic, in all relations sustained toward other divisions of the Church and other in-

[3] Rev. 22: 17. [4] Eph. 1: 22, 23. [5] Rev. 21: 10.

dividual believers,—to know that the same Holy Spirit Who is the source of life in one is also the source of life in the other. Then, too, this conception of the Church is helpful because it sets forth a great ideal. Whatever the Scriptures teach about *the Church,* every believer should try to have reproduced and realized in his own local congregation and in his own denomination. This brings up an important question.

Chief Aim and Duty of the Church

What is the chief aim and duty of the Church? What is the Church for?

Social Life.

If the question were answered according to existing conditions, some would have to say, that the Church is *a social organization.* Now there is no doubt that there ought to be in all church life a great deal of Christian fellowship. The Apostle John says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." [6] And the life of the early Church was a picture of believers coming together and rejoicing in the things which, as believers, they had in common or could share together. Yet scarcely any one would dare say that the chief aim of the Christian Church is social life, not even Christian social life.

[6] John 3: 14.

A Training School.

Another answer would be that the Church is *a training school.* Neither will any one deny that there is in all church life a great deal of the training element. There are moral lessons to be learned, spiritual truths to be apprehended, character to be developed, God's will to be unfolded as it reaches out to human life everywhere. How much of training is necessary, both intellectual and religious, to master the laws of the Kingdom! Youth is to be instructed in righteousness, and old age is to be kept young and fresh by constant spiritual development. Yet no one would want to say that the chief aim and end of the Church was to serve as a training school.

Guardian of Truth.

Another common conception is that the Church was established to serve as *the guardian of truth.* No one can look through history without seeing that the Church has been the guardian of the truth, the Defender of the Faith, through many periods that were dark with scepticism and dominated by sin. Yet surely it was not chiefly to defend His truth that Christ organized the Church in the world. We may say here what Spurgeon said of the Bible. He likened it to a lion, which men were trying to protect by caging it. "Let him loose," he cried, "and he will defend himself."

Paul's Definition.

What then is the chief aim and end of the Church? God's World Plan is given in the

Book. The individual life plan is revealed in the Book. The divine Church plan will also be found in the Book. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians concerning God's great purpose, tells us what is the place of the Church in God's thought. The Plan of God is "to the intent, that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places *might be made known through the Church* the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."[7] Now "the manifold wisdom of God in Christ" is a redeemed humanity. The Church is appointed to display to the universe the glory of a redeemed humanity. And this the Church cannot do until the Gospel of Christ has been carried to all humanity and proclaimed to every creature.

The Body of Christ.

There is another clear word which declares *the missionary purpose* of the Church's existence. It is where that figure is developed in which the Church is represented as "the Body of Christ" upon earth. That which He, as Head, desires to have realized here on earth can only be realized through the Church, which is His body. His lips can only speak as the Church speaks for Him. His hands can only reach out in blessing and His feet move on errands of mercy, as the Church, His Body, gives expression to His life.[8]

[7] Eph. 3: 10-11. [8] John 17: 7-11.

As Christ's own love was world-wide, so must the Church's love be world-wide.

Its First Duty.

So Dr. James Denney says, "If the spontaneous expression of the Church's life is worship, *its first duty is to evangelize.*" And Dr. W. O. Carver says, "The Church is the product of missions and *exists to promote them.* One does not forget the nurture of Christian character in the members, but this nurture is 'for the work of service.'" He makes the missionary spirit "the *supreme proof* of loyalty to the Lord—a test which applies first to the individual Christian and through him to the Church. The Church is a lampstand and when it no longer serves to illumine the darkness, the lampstand is removed out of its place." Andrew Murray is equally emphatic when he says, *"Missions are the chief end of the Church.* All the work of the Holy Spirit in converting sinners and sanctifying believers, has this for its one aim—to fit them for the part that each must at once take in winning back the world to God." And the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of the great Anglican Church, in his address before the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, said, "But be quite sure—it is my single thought to-night—that *the place of missions in the life of the Church must be the central place,* and none other. That is what matters. Let people get hold of that, and it will

The Central Place.

tell—it is the merest commonplace to say it—it will tell for us at home as it will tell for those afield. Secure for that thought its true place, in our plans, our policy, our prayers, and then—why then, the issue is His, not ours. But it may well be that if that come true, 'there be some standing here to-night who shall not taste of death till they see,'—here on earth, in a way we know not now,—'the Kingdom of God come with power.' "

The Church Fulfilling Its Mission

Yet to be Seen.

The world has not yet witnessed either *the Church* or any single division of the Church, wholly surrendered to the fulfilment of its divine mission. The world has witnessed individuals surrendered to the will of God and burning with a passion for the realization of God's will in their lives,—and the vision of such lives has been full of glory. But the world has not yet seen this thing happen in the life of an entire Church or denomination. The nearest approach to this ideal would seem to have been in the Golden Age of the early Church, but details are lacking and the vision is not clear. The next nearest approach to this ideal was in the Moravian Church. "In the first twenty years of its existence it actually sent out more missionaries than the whole Protestant Church had done in 200 years. It alone," con-

tinues Andrew Murray, "of all the Churches, has actually sought to carry out the great truth, that *to gather in to Christ the souls He died to save is the one object for which the Church exists.* It alone has sought to teach and train all of its members to count it their first duty to Him Who loved them, to give their life to make Him known to others." The rallying-cry of this Church is, TO WIN FOR THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERINGS. In 1898, the Moravian Church had 24,150 communicants in the three home lands of this denomination. At that time they had 361 missionaries (including wives) on the foreign field, or one to each 64 home communicants. The figures for the evangelical Churches of North America reveal but one foreign missionary to every 4,000 home communicants.[9]

A Rallying Cry.

And why may not this vision be realized? Its realization must first be in the life of the individual, then in the life of an individual congregation, then in the life of an individual denomination, then—please God—in the life of the entire Church of Christ. Nor are the conditions under which this vision will be realized, far to seek.

Accept Christ's Plan.

(1) There must be the fullest acceptance of the *Plan of Christ.* The missionary purpose must dominate every department of church activity and

[9] J. R. Mott's "The Pastor and Modern Missions."

every sphere of church life. Selfish considerations, wilful unchangefulness, and unholy ambitions must be dethroned in the life of the Church, that the Plan of Christ may be enthroned. The conflict with Self will not be less keen or less real than in the individual soul making its surrender to Christ. As every Church has a corporate life, every Church has a corporate self and a corporate selfishness. That corporate selfishness must be crucified, if Christ is to be enthroned in the life of that Church. The force of Christ's words must be recognized by each Church in its corporate life, as they are by each individual in his individual life: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." In the acceptance of Christ's Plan for its life, the Church comes to its Calvary.

Accept Christ's Power.

(2) There must be the fullest acceptance of the *Power of Christ.* Thus must the Church come also to Pentecost. The Holy Spirit's leadership must be made supreme and recognized as real. He must be leaned upon. Merely ethical preaching will give way to preaching which will make supernaturalism a reality, and recognize it as the proper atmosphere for all Christian life and service. The necessity for a careful discerning of spirits, will be no ground for refusing to the Holy Spirit the utmost freedom in His activities within the Church, nor for denying the reality of His

free and personal operations. And the Power of Christ is needed to realize the Plan of Christ. But the Power of Christ will not be granted *save for* the Plan of Christ. Holy Spirit power cannot be commanded for the promotion of unsanctified aims and purposes.

Accept Christ's Presence.

(3) There must be the fullest acceptance of the *Presence of Christ.* This will come naturally with the gift of the Spirit, but emphasis needs to be laid upon this characteristic of the missionary Church. Here the Church comes to the crowning of its life with joy.

The Early Church.

The life of the early Church is noteworthy because of the vivid sense of the presence of Christ which we find distinguishing it. The Risen Lord was felt to be present, in the midst of His Church.

Zinzendorf.

Of Zinzendorf, also, we read, "The person of Christ became central in his theology and in his preaching and in the preaching of his brethren." And again, among the characteristic tenets which this great man held, we find the following enumerated with special prominence: "the presentation of Christ as God, with an acceptance of all the consequences of this presentation: amongst the rest, prayer directly to Christ: . . . . the privilege of personal daily fellowship with the Lord Jesus in spite of unrealized unworthiness and personal sinfulness: the obligation and privilege of following the guidance and leading of the

Lord, the chief Elder and Bishop of souls, the Good Shepherd, to Whom both the welfare of the individual Christian and the prosperity and progress of the church are a care."[10] This consciousness of the personal presence of the Living Lord is the need of the Church to-day, so that it too may be able to say:

"Loud mockers in the roaring street
Say Christ is crucified again:
Twice pierced His gospel-bearing feet,
Twice broken His great heart in vain.

"I hear and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the while."

We pass now from the general to the specific; from the Church as a whole, or the church as a congregation, to the consideration of the particular Church or denomination whose life calls for these missionary studies and to whose life the majority of the readers of this book are related.

The United Presbyterian Church

A Definite Task.

The important question comes up, *Has the United Presbyterian Church any definite share and responsibility in carrying the Gospel to all the world?* It is not enough to say that it is the duty of the whole Church to carry the Gospel to

[10] J. T. Hamilton's "History of the Moravian Church."

THE MODEL MISSIONARY CHURCH

This diagram illustrates the main features of a model missionary church. It is based upon the report of a Commission of twelve, appointed by four influential bodies, representing the missionary activities of America: The Foreign Missions Conference of America, the Home Missions Council of America, the Young People's Missionary Movement and the Laymen's Missionary Movement. The Commission was appointed to define the main features of a standard Missionary church.

(1) The inner circle indicates *the machinery* needed,—a Missionary Committee. Circumstances must govern the formation of this committee, but such a committee is essential.

(2) The next circle indicates *the spheres* which call for missionary cultivation. There are six. It is not intended that the Missionary Committee shall itself cultivate all these spheres, but merely insure that an agency is at work cultivating them properly.

(3) The outer circle indicates *the four forms* which missionary cultivation will assume: Educational, devotional, financial and practical. These relate roughly to the four topics: Information, prayer, giving, personal service.

the whole world. What is everybody's business becomes nobody's business. Then, too, if the United Presbyterian Church has a part to perform, by what authority is the task assigned to her? We commonly speak of the foreign mission fields of the United Presbyterian Church as being found in Egypt, India and the Egyptian Sudan. There are some 9,000,000 souls in Egypt, who need to be evangelized; there are 5,000,000 in India, in the Punjab; there are also a million in the Egyptian Sudan. By what authority do we say that these 15,000,000 souls have been given to the United Presbyterian Church to evangelize? This is an important question. If this task was assigned through some accident, then to-morrow's accident may rid the Church of the burden of evangelizing these people. If some human reasoning assigned to the Church this task, may it not be that somebody else's reasoning will relieve the Church of this task? But *if God assigned it* to the Church, then the Church cannot shirk the duty, nor unload it, nor repudiate it. The Church must finish the task. How then may we know whether God has assigned to the United Presbyterian Church these fields to evangelize?

Urim and Thummim.

In days of old, as we read in the Old Testament, they had the Urim and Thummim. When anyone wished to know the will of God, yes or

no, he consulted the Urim or Thummim. We do not know much about this oracle. We do know, these were two stones in the ephod of the high priest. Some have supposed that the priests could tell the will of God by the way that the stones flashed. Others have thought that the stones were tossed in the air, and that the will of God was known by the way in which they fell. At any rate, we read that there was this method of discovering the will of God.[11] It may be that many, in this day, wish that they might have the Urim and Thummim of old to relieve them of anxiety as they seek to discover the will of God. But if that is the only way in which we may discover the will of God, then we cannot know the will of God on this subject, nor on any other subject. Surely, however, there is some way of knowing God's will.

The Way and the Leading.

There is a beautiful sermon by the Rev. William M. Taylor, D.D., entitled, "The Way and the Leading." Dr. Taylor lays hold of that incident in the Old Testament, where the servant of the Patriarch is sent to a far country, to "the old country," to find a wife for the son of the Patriarch. And the servant comes into this distant land, and he sits by the well, watching the people come and go. He does not know which way to turn, which home to visit. In his perplexity,

[11] Num. 27: 21.

he prays to God. And just here there slips into the narrative the beautiful words which we find in the old version, "I, being in the way, the Lord led me." And Dr. Taylor shows that when we are in the way of *faith,* and in the way of *prayer,* and in the way of *duty,* we are led of the Lord, just as truly and just as surely, as was the servant of the Patriarch almost 4,000 years ago.

Of Divine Assignment

Divinely Appointed.

If anyone will study the history of the entrance of the United Presbyterian Church into its several mission fields, he will recognize the hand of God guiding the Church to these fields and assigning to the Church the task of evangelizing their peoples.

The Way of Prayer.

(1) *We were in the way of prayer*: It was at a prayer-meeting, in Allegheny, that five persons, —Messrs. John Alexander and James McCandless, Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Lockhart, and Dr. Rodgers,—were led to consider India as a field for missionary work. The selection of the little prayer-meeting became the selection of the congregation. The selection of the congregation became, after prayer, the choice of the Synod, and thus of one branch of our Church. Those who have read the history of our India Mission will recall too, that not by immediate advances, but

after repeated disappointments in other directions, the first missionary, the Rev. Andrew Gordon, was selected for appointment to this distant field. His own account of those days of beginning shows how much of prayer entered into his own life plans.

Now, what was so true of the founding of our India Mission was likewise true of our Missions in Egypt and the Sudan. We were in the way of prayer, and can say, Surely God led us.

Providence.

(2) *We were in the way of providential guidance*: How clearly is this illustrated in the beginning of our Mission in Egypt. We then had a mission in Syria. This mission showed little or no progress. The rule of the Turk prevented missionary expansion. Political troubles threatened what work existed. Ill-health then led a missionary to Egypt. This resulted in the discovery of the unoccupied, the equally needy, the more salubrious, the far more open, field for missionary activity which existed in the Nile Valley. This unity of events lying wholly within the control of a divine Providence, led to the opening of the Egyptian Mission.

So, too, was it with our Sudan Mission. For decades our missionary activity was limited to the First Cataract. Beyond this, lay a hermit nation, —the Egyptian Sudan. The White Nile was everywhere the synonym for death. There were no

convenient means of transportation. There was no safe government; there was, apparently, no sufficient incentive for an invasion of the Sudan, whether for gain or for glory, whether for commerce or for missionary effort. Then came the Mahdi war, the martyrdom of Gordon, the Kitchener campaigns, the victory at Omdurman, the conquest of the Sudan. The name of Gordon stirred the home Church. The British Government removed every physical danger. Still our Church hesitated. Then God suddenly raised up in Great Britain a sum of money which would suffice to begin the Mission. Still we delayed. Then God thrust forth into the Sudan, in government service, the young men of our Egyptian Church and Mission, and the Church was literally compelled to occupy this, our most recent mission field. We were in the way of providential circumstances beyond human reasoning or control, and God led us.

An Exclusive Commission.

(3) *We were also in the way of an exclusive commission.* There is scarcely any surer proof of a divine commission than the continued absence of any overlapping with others in the execution of that commission.

Would that there were opportunity to point out adequately the absolute responsibility which relates us to the millions of our mission fields. I go to India. I see every mission occupying a clearly-defined territory. To this canal or river or high-

way, is the field of one Mission. Beyond it is the field of another. Each Mission is taxed by the greatness of its own field, and has neither the desire nor the ability to enter another's field. Within this territory, then, are five million people, who, unless they receive the Gospel from United Presbyterian missionaries, must, so far as human vision avails, go down to Christless graves.

Egypt.

I go to Egypt. I mark how for twenty-five years our Mission there was the only missionary organization operating in that most historic, most attractive, most accessible mission field. I see that even now, where other missionary societies have come in, they recognize the local character of their work, so that the Nile Valley, in almost its entirety, has been and still is practically the exclusive field of the United Presbyterian Mission. With the most liberal concessions possible to the responsibilities of other missionary agencies, there are in Egypt some nine million souls looking to us for the Gospel.

The Sudan.

I go to the Sudan. I speak with the Governor General of the Sudan, Sir Reginald Wingate, and he tells me that his government has assigned exclusively to our Mission the great water-shed of the Sobat River. I stand over against these providential exclusions of other agencies and the exclusive assignment of these fields to our

Church, and I see in these a new and a divine vindication of the way in which God has led us.

These are not theories. These are facts, facts of the history of a half century of missions, and "facts are the fingers of God." To refuse to accept as a divine assignment the obligations which rest upon us for the evangelization of some fifteen million souls in Egypt, India and the Sudan, is to ignore a divine providence, and to do violence to the fundamental principle of a faith which believes in a God of history. There is a better way than to refuse. It is to accept our divinely assigned commission and go forth to obey. Not Theories, Facts.

Past Effort Justified

A second question is asked, *Have the missionary beginnings of the past half century been such as to justify the Church in going forward with confidence to the completion of this work?* We say "missionary beginnings," for we shall presently see that these past efforts have only been beginnings. Let us recognize now, however, that these efforts have been wonderfully approved of God. It would require an examination of the history of each of our fields, to adequately illustrate this statement. Here, we can only point to a few outstanding successes. Justified.

(1) There is numerical progress. It is said

Numbers.

that we Americans are ever quoting figures, counting both dollars and souls, instead of weighing them. However, discount figures as one may, there yet remains sufficient force in those which we shall give, to warrant their presentation.

Remember that it is but little over five decades since the sailing vessel "Sabine," left New York harbor, bearing across the sea our first missionaries to *India,*—one man and two women,—inexperienced pioneers they were, unequipped with that vast machinery of missions which these succeeding centuries have provided, unsupported by the experience and prestige of recent decades of missionary effort; and they went forth to cope, single-handed, with difficulties great in themselves, and greater because unknown and unmeasured. To-day, we look to India and find not merely converts, not merely organized congregations, but presbyteries and a synod,—the throbbing life of an organic Christianity. One presbytery yonder, that of Gujranwala, is larger in membership than any presbytery we have in America, save one, that of Monongahela. Another presbytery yonder, that of Sialkot, is larger than the combined Synods of Colorado and California, while the entire Synod of the Punjab ranks third among the thirteen synods which

constitute our United Presbyterian Church in the world.

The beginnings of our work in *Egypt* constituted a trial of faith. One year passed, and there were no converts. Two, three, four years, and no converts! The fifth year closed and there were but four, and only two of these were natives of Egypt, yet to-day we have more communicants in the Nile Valley than in the entire Synod of Illinois; while the ingatherings are little less than a thousand every year. No Converts.

Group our foreign churches together, and you will find that one-fifth of the membership of the United Presbyterian Church is across the sea. Were we addressing any audience representing perfectly our United Presbyterian Church in the world, the address would need to be translated, into one foreign tongue to benefit every tenth person, and into another foreign tongue to bring it within the reach of another of every ten persons. Some fifty years ago, the Associate Church, which helped to form the United Presbyterian Church, had some 23,500 members, but our foreign churches to-day exceed that number by over nine thousand. One-fifth Abroad

And the significance of this numerical growth lies in the fact, that in the last ten years that foreign membership has increased two hundred and sixty-one per cent.

Quality.

(2) To numerical progress, we may add certain attainments that are not to be set forth in mere figures. We could refer to the quality of the Christian life that is being developed across the sea, in the midst of Islam, Hinduism and Paganism.

In the Night.

"How deeply was I affected," wrote Mr. Kruidenier recently from Egypt, "when, in a certain place in this district, having laid me down to rest, at a late hour, a voice unexpectedly broke upon the stillness of the night. I listened and wondered. It was the voice of prayer, and as it continued and grew in intensity and earnestness, I could distinguish the voice of the teacher and hear his petition. At this late hour of the night, he prayed aloud. He prayed for himself and for his work, for forgiveness and strength, for wisdom and consecration, for fearlessness and faithfulness; for his loved ones he prayed, for his pupils, for his townsfolk, and especially for Islam, that the Moslems of his country might be saved; and as I listened, I too could not help but pray. At last, there seemed to be no strength any more and the voice ceased."

But for many such illustrations there is not space.

Liberality and Self-Support.

(3) The measurement of past success must also take into consideration the promotion of a spirit of liberality and self-support in our work

abroad. There is a double value to progress in this direction. On the one hand, where we find this spirit, we are assured of the genuineness of the work for Christ. There is no occasion for any suspicion that the conversions are for the sake of the "loaves and fishes." On the other hand, the maintenance of Christian institutions by the people to whom these institutions minister, releases our American funds for further work elsewhere. We do well to prize highly every sign of progress in liberality and self-support.

It is the distinctive glory of our Missions abroad that they are leaders in this movement. In India, it was on the tide of a great revival that this movement toward self-support came into prominence, and to-day we have there twenty-five congregations that are entirely self-supporting. And this is in the face of a poverty so great, that we are prepared to say, that there is not one person reading these lines who would even consent to such self-support, if he were to see out of what material limitations Indian Christians give. Indeed, our India Mission has been criticised more than once for its insistence on self-support. But we may put over against that superficial criticism the deep connection that has always existed between the self-support movement and the great experiences of revival that

have come to that field. The instances are not few where one-tenth of the entire crop of grain at harvest time—the only revenue of an Indian farmer,—has been set aside for God's treasury.

Liberality.

In Egypt, there are twenty-two self-supporting pastorates and over $50,000 was given last year for Church purposes. But think of the great scope of our missionary operations in the Nile Valley: 70 churches ministering to some 10,000 church members, 18 schools training some 17,000 pupils, medical work touching some 50,000 sick, and a book department distributing some 70,000 volumes and religious works,—a vast enterprise! "Our missionary operations," did we say? We take undue credit. The operation of this great work involves the annual expenditure of more than $290,000, but, mark this, less than forty cents of every dollar expended comes from these United States,—more than three-fifths is derived from Egypt itself.

Reflex Blessings.

(4) There are many other manifestations of God's blessing upon our work which ought to be named, such as the development of the organic life of our Mission churches, the providential over-rulings and protection displayed through a half-century of labor, experiences of revival so dramatic and yet so abiding. We pass these all by, to speak of the reflex influence for good of this foreign missionary effort upon the life of the

home Church, for if this be established, then our past missionary efforts must be justified to the last disbeliever in missions.

Breadth of Vision.

It is a special danger of a small denomination, that it shall lack in breadth of vision and breadth of sympathy. It is not likely to lack in earnestness, but it is likely to lack in breadth of outlook, simply because of the pressure put upon it to preserve and develop its own life. Without false pride, may we not claim that our Church has escaped this danger? She is not to-day a sect, but a part of God's great army. She recognizes her responsibility, not to minister to a few settlements of people, but to carry her share of the burden of evangelizing and Christianizing America. We are not stating more than the truth when we say that no single factor in maintaining and developing this broad outlook in our Church, can compare with the influence exerted upon the life of the home Church by her foreign missionary activities.

Gifts.

That the same helpful,—not hindering,—influence was exerted upon *the gifts of the Church to her own work in America,* through the stimulus of her obligations abroad, is easily proved. During the past nine years which are regarded as years of special foreign missionary agitation, the average percentage of increase in gifts over each preceding year, has been to *foreign missions*

three and three-tenths per cent, to *home missions seven and six-tenths* per cent.

We may quote here the words which the Secretary of our own Home Board spoke at a Jubilee Foreign Missionary Convention in 1904: "Other influences have been working to increase the offerings of our people to the support and extension of the work of our Church, but the very noticeable enlargement of such gifts during the past fifty years, is, undoubtedly, in great measure due to the reflex influence of our foreign missionary work."

In the presence of these facts,—numerical progress, the development of Christian character in the midst of heathenism, the spirit of liberality and self-support in the native churches abroad and the reflex blessing of missionary activity on the life of the home Church,—may we not assert with confidence that God has justified and vindicated the beginning of our effort to discharge our missionary obligation?

Present Agencies Inadequate

Are They Adequate?

A third question now needs to be asked: *Are our missionary agencies adequate for the accomplishment of the task before us?* We would not weaken any statement made as to the marvelous extension of the work during past years. But

in the face of all that has been said concerning the blessing of God upon our work, there is need to inquire concerning the adequacy of our present agencies. There is danger of so glorying over the successes of the past, as to forget the needs which remain. There is such a thing as idealizing the past, when that past represents years not of God's working, but of man's delay. In our field in India, it is estimated that some 7,000,000 have gone down to Christless graves since we began to labor there, because at no time have our missionary agencies been adequate for the presentation of Christ to them. In Egypt, some 12,000,000 have so passed away. Was this God's will or was it human negligence? To-day our missionary agencies are calculated to suffice for the evangelization of some 3,000,000 during an entire generation. But there are 15,000,000 in our mission fields. Is it God's will that we should leave 12,000,000 to die without even hearing of Christ, or is it human negligence and sin? Is it God's will that in these foreign fields some 400,000 shall die each year without having had a chance to know of the only Savior of mankind? Our Church glories in its orthodoxy, in its loyalty to Jesus Christ as the only Mediator and Savior. But we hold such a faith to our own condemnation, unless we parallel it with missionary zeal, for, as some one has said, "Can you con-

Dying Without Hearing.

ceive of anything more fatal, more monstrous, more immoral, than a doctrine which declares men lost without Christ, and then refuses to make Christ known to them?"

A Simple Comparison.

Let us face the fact: Our present missionary agencies are inadequate for the doing of the thing which we claim to be trying to do. Perhaps this can be made clear by a simple comparison. Take a community of one thousand souls thoroughly representative of religious conditions in America. Out of these 1,000 persons, more than *250 would be Christians,* members of evangelical Christian churches, and the majority of the others would at least want to be called Christians, no matter what our own personal opinion of them might be. Among these 250 Christian church members, there would be six ordained ministers and many trained Christian workers. Now we take a similar group of one thousand souls thoroughly representative of religious conditions in our mission fields of Egypt, India and the Sudan. Out of these 1,000 persons there would not be 250 Christians; there would be *two Christian church members.* And how many ordained ministers? Not six, not even one; but we would need to bring together *more than 116 such groups* before we would reach the average parish of each ordained minister,—and this is counting every ordained man, whether foreign or native.

Ourselves and God.

It is true that we have with us "the God of impossibilities," and we read "five of you shall chase a hundred and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand." But it is also true that in the spiritual conquest of the world, human agencies must bear some proper relation to the work which is to be accomplished, and God will not permit men to make faith in Him the subterfuge for spiritual sloth and selfishness.

We Can and Must

The Imperative.

In the presence of the divine commission which the United Presbyterian Church has received and in the presence of a task which is so sadly unfulfilled, *the Church can and must carry this work through to its completion.* With our missionary obligation clearly defined, with the proper methods and agencies for missionary work fully discovered through the experiences of the past, with a full consciousness of the inadequacy of our present missionary force, it remains for us now to actually *do* what has hitherto only been begun.

And a rare advantage is at hand as this task is undertaken. We have at hand an estimate,—the estimate of experts,—of what is needed to evangelize our foreign fields. Our missionaries in each field met for days to consider this question,

and their answer came to us in appeals for 485 missionaries. Lest any are led to believe that these answers express snap judgment or mere enthusiasm, let us add, that since these appeals were issued, other Missions have considered this question, and their answers are parallel with those of our Missions.

Fourfold Increase.

Let us add, further, that quite recently these missionaries reviewed the whole question, and their present judgment confirms their former judgment,—*the present force must be quadrupled,* some 400 missionaries must be added to the force in the field, and our present foreign missionary budget must advance from some $300,000 to $1,250,000 a year.

Can We?

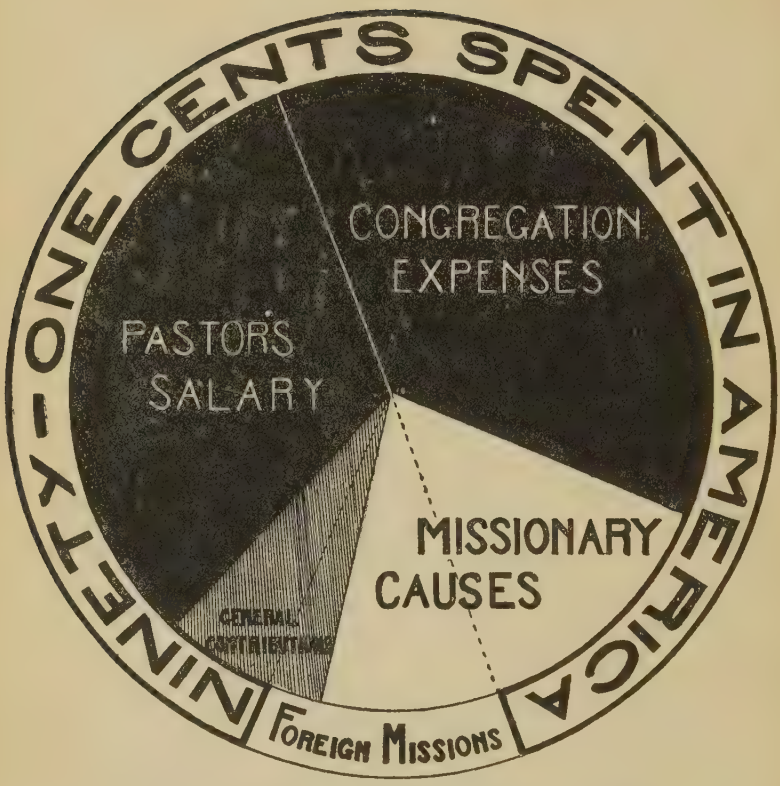
In the face of this definition of our task, we dare say it: We *can.* It is pitiful that such a statement should require proof. To do this work is only to ask for one missionary volunteer from every third congregation in the denomination. It is only to ask one life out of every 335 members of the Church. During the Civil War, Kansas gave one soldier to every five and eight-tenths of her population, Illinois one to every six and seven-tenths of her population, and will one to every 335 members be too great a demand upon sons of the Covenanters, when the Son of God leads forth to His holy war?

We have spoken of quadrupling our present

budget to foreign missions. At first thought, many are inclined to exclaim, Impossible,—simply because they have unconsciously thought that the statement carried with it the demand for a quadrupling of all our gifts. This is not so. Of the total gifts of the Church, one-third is for the salaries of ministers. There is no proposition here to multiply by four the present salary budget in America. Another third of what is contributed is for congregational expenses, and there is no proposition here to multiply these by four. We submit the following test: Think of what *you* gave last year to the cause of foreign missions. Do you dare say here before God, that it is not possible, that it would be even seriously inconvenient, for you to quadruple that amount? Yes, to quadruple our foreign missionary budget would be to strain (?) the resources of the United Presbyterian Church in America, by asking from each member less than two cents a day. We can do it.

We Must.

And, *we must.* We must for the sake of our foreign fields. It would require a separate chapter to show how in Egypt, India, the Sudan, the same open door by which the missionary may enter, is being sought by thousands of hostile influences; how the fields white unto spiritual harvest, where not harvested at once, are becoming



WHERE THE CHURCH DOLLAR GOES

The records show that the United Presbyterian Church of North America contributed last year $2,427,617. Where did it go?

Where does the Church dollar go?

Sixty-eight cents of every dollar go toward the local expenses of the congregation: pastor's salary and other expenses.

Nine cents go to General Contributions; for the most part local benevolences apart from Church support.

Twenty-three cents—less than one-fourth of the dollar—go to missionary causes, at home and abroad. Did Christ say, "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Of every Church dollar, ninety-one cents stay in America, nine cents go abroad. It is scarcely accurate to say that foreign missions are being overdone. Again we ask, did Christ say, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Did He mean it?

fields hardened against decades of missionary effort.

We must for the sake of our missionaries. It is simply breaking them down to-day to stand over against the overwhelming need and under the overwhelming obligation, with the limited supply and the limited strength which is theirs. For Their Sake.

We must do it for the sake of our Church in America. We have had this ideal of actually evangelizing our fields presented to us. We have enthroned it, by General Assembly resolution and endorsement, among the purposes of our Church. We have declared to the world that this was our aim, and we have not seriously undertaken it. If we would save ourselves from double dealing with God, if we would safeguard our sensitiveness to the leading of the Spirit, if we would prevent the hardening of our spiritual nature, we must no longer talk nor resolve, we must proceed to do what is to be done. For Our Sake.

To do this, will require that every minister and pastor give this enterprise his best thought. He will need first to accept the ideal of actually evangelizing our mission fields. He will then need to discover what the realization of that ideal will require of him and of his congregation. And then he must proceed to create in his congregation those conditions, which, if duplicated in Every Minister.

every congregation in our denomination, would mean the full realization of the ideal.

Every Christian.

Every individual Christian in his own personal life will also be called upon to accept the ideal. He will need to ask in his prayer life, in his life of stewardship, in his home life, what demands this will make of him. And then, he, too, must seek to establish in his life those conditions which, if reproduced in other lives of our Church, will mean the full realization of this ideal of the evangelization of our mission fields.

The Church stands at a "decisive hour." We tremble to think how meaningless, how inglorious, the future may be, unless there shall be lifted ideals worthy of the strength we now possess and the opportunity now set before us.

Another Vision.

But there rises another vision. It is the vision of a Church, "having the glory of God" resting upon it, surrendering the powers of its organic life, as individuals in ages gone by have surrendered the powers of their individual lives, fully to the realization of God's will upon earth, its corporate life made subservient to this one aim and dominated by this one ambition, "To win for the Lamb that was slain the reward of His sufferings." I see this Church, baptized with a new power,—the Power of God for the Work of God. I see a new beauty transforming its character, a new grace adorning its brow, as it

enters into a fellowship with its Lord, deeper than has yet been claimed by any Church upon earth. I see this Church preparing, for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the expressions of its love for its Lord: three sections of the world, evangelized by its missionary labors and Christianized by the accompanying power of its Lord. I see this Church fully surrendered to its Lord, entirely responsive to His will, absolutely obedient to His bidding, used of God for spiritual leadership in the world. And, across the longer or shorter stretches of Time, stands the Son of God, seeing of the travail of His soul and satisfied! It is ours to make this vision true in the life of our Church.